



# THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3402

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 1997

WEATHER: Damp and windy in the north; fine in the south

(12 45p) 40p

## IN THE TABLOID

**THE OASIS TOUR:  
FIRST NIGHT  
VERDICT**

## COMMENT

**THE BURNING  
QUESTION FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT**

## MEDIA+

**ABSOLUTELY  
FABULOUS, BUT  
DIFFERENT**

Creative muses: A set of statues of the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, representing inspiration in the arts, which are to be displayed on the parapet of St Michael's Church, Shoreditch, east London, by the London Architectural Salvage and Supply Co. The statues, by the sculptor Bernard Sindall, were removed from their original home, the nearby Barbican Centre, in April. Photograph: John Lawrence



Tomorrow morning, *The Independent* is changing. You will find everything you have come to expect from us – the same cast of top writers, the excellent pictures, the intelligence, the unbiased attitude. But you will also find a fresher, sharper-looking paper, which is easier to use and – I hope – more enjoyable to read.

We are changing because, after more than a decade of accumulated experience, we think it is time to break the mould of custom and habit to produce a better paper – not just than this one you are reading, but than anything else on the newsagents' shelves. Throughout this year, not only over the past few weeks, we have been asking ourselves some hard questions about many of the assumptions of broadsheet journalism. Has everyone's agenda become a little lazy, a little narrow? Are there lessons to be learned from overseas? Is the writing as focused and thought-through as it should be? Are the designs of papers actually helpful, or just the result of copy-cat reflexes during a time of intense competition?

As a result, we have come up with a new kind of broadsheet. It hasn't simply been redesigned, though it will look different. It is edited and written in a different way, which will be longer for the journalists and better for the readers.

No one will pick up tomorrow's paper and think we've dumbed down – far from it. But intelligent should mean bright and shining, not grey and cramped. Tomorrow's *Independent* will shock some conservative-minded souls. I have no doubt. But we've always been the paper for people of a less conventional caste of mind. So I believe that most of you will get the idea immediately, and grin when you see it.

Andrew Marr

Hugh Dykes: Former Tory MP has defected to LibDems

Hugh Dykes, page 15

Andrew Marr

## A black Monday for Tories

**Anthony Bevins**

Political Editor

Criticism of the substance and style of William Hague's leadership of the Conservative Party is building up a head of steam in advance of next month's party conference in Blackpool.

Hugh Dykes, a former Conservative MP, yesterday announced that he was switching to the Liberal Democrats because of the Tories' steady drift away from One Nation policies.

But criticism of the leadership had gone way beyond the moderate wing of the party, who will continue to splinter off to the Liberal Democrats and Labour.

Former ministers and back-bench critics are also sniping at Mr Hague's style and tactics – a campaign that will be bol-

stered by an embarrassing royal rebuke, delivered yesterday. After the Conservative leader used an interview on BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* to condemn the "shabby" way in which Tony Blair exploited the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, a senior royal source went out of his way to pay tribute to the No 10's "very positive" contribution.

Mr Hague accused No 10 of leaking confidential advice to put the Government in a good light and the Royal Family in a bad light. "Now that's shabby politics," he said. A Government source said that Mr Hague was telling a "pack of lies", and although the royal source wanted to avoid becoming embroiled in a political row, he sided with Downing Street's version of

events. One astute political operator, with a proven track record, said last night: "Mr Hague's problem is that he has no strategy." There is also growing criticism, among MPs and constituency associations, of the way in which Mr Hague is "consulting" the party about proposed modernisation, which is linking with a call to endorse his leadership.

One prominent Conservative MP said it was absurd to ask the party to vote on the leadership when there was only one candidate being offered. "I think the Soviet Union was dead and buried," he said.

There is a lingering, but pervasive, view among MPs that Mr Hague is very much on probation, and although the royal source wanted to avoid becoming embroiled in a political row, he sided with Downing Street's version of

events. One astute political operator, with a proven track record, said last night: "Mr Hague's problem is that he has no strategy." There is also growing criticism, among MPs and constituency associations, of the way in which Mr Hague is "consulting" the party about proposed modernisation, which is linking with a call to endorse his leadership.

Replies to his critics, Mr Hague told *Breakfast with Frost*: "We had a heavy defeat and we've got to recognise that.

"We've got to change some things in our party, so I'm setting about changing the organisation to make sure the Tory party is a more united force, more cohesive force, is more democratic, involves more people, and that people feel involved in it, so that we have a disciplinary committee to

protect the integrity of the party.

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## news

## significant shorts

**Two-thirds of paedophiles fail to report to police**

As many as two-thirds of the sex offenders required to sign up to the so-called paedophile register have failed to report to police, it was disclosed yesterday. Probation workers have identified 2,200 former convicts who should be on the list, but by the registration deadline of midnight last night, only about 700-800 are expected to have come forward.

It is thought most avoiders are simply laying low and hoping the fuss will pass over, but a few paedophiles are thought to have "gone underground" by changing their addresses and identities. Brian Mackenzie, president of the Police Superintendents' Association, called yesterday for the identities of the most dangerous paedophiles who have not registered to be published on the internet, despite warnings that this might lead to vigilante attacks.

The National Association of Probation Officers is required to tell all offenders on probation, parole or community service for serious sex crimes against women or children that they must report to police.

**Dewar joins Welsh 'Yes' campaign**

Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, yesterday joined the Welsh Assembly campaign but denied Labour was trying to bounce the Welsh into a "copycat vote". Fresh from his triumph in steering through the referendum for a Scottish Parliament, Mr Dewar insisted that devolution was for the benefit of everyone in Britain.

"I believe people in Wales will vote Yes on Thursday, and in large numbers. I am not here to ask Wales for a copycat vote. It is a decision for Wales. But what happened in Scotland symbolises public support behind modernising the British constitution. It is important for everyone in the UK in a wider context," he said.

Earlier, Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown cautioned against appearing to tell Welsh people to simply follow Scotland's example. "Welsh people aren't going to be told what to do by the Scottish people. Let's not say that because Scotland has done this, Wales must do it too," he said on GMTV.

**Inquiry into care-home deaths**

An independent inquiry begins today into how a county council handled cases of abuse against the residents of two care homes.

Former staff of the two Longcane homes in Stoke Poges, Bucks, are being asked to come forward to help with the investigation.

Nursing home director Angela Rowe, 39, (left) was jailed for two and a half years in June for her part in a catalogue of abuses against residents during a 10-year "reign of terror." Senior care assistant Lorraine Field, 42, was also jailed for 15 months for ill-treating residents with learning difficulties at the two homes which were run like "army camps."

**Wife of top cricket umpire killed**

The wife of a top cricket umpire was killed and their son was seriously injured when their car collided with a bus yesterday. Barrie Leadbeater was due to officiate at a match between Middlesex and Nottinghamshire at Lord's when he was told that his wife Jacqueline and son Michael had been hurt in an accident in Schools, near Leeds.

He immediately travelled to St James' Hospital in Leeds, where the news was broken that Mrs Leadbeater had been certified dead on arrival. Michael, one of the couple's three sons, is seriously ill but stable in the hospital.

Mrs Leadbeater, who was in her late 40s, was driving a Ford Orion and her son was a passenger.

The car collided with the bus, which was empty, on Leeds Road yesterday morning. The bus then hit a wall and ended up in the garden of a house.

**EU gets tough on cereal killers**

Tougher rules on tiny toys given away free with chocolate eggs, crisps and cereals are set to be introduced by Brussels, to cut the risk of children choking on them.

The move was welcomed yesterday by Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs Minister, who said he wanted clarification of current safety precautions taken by food manufacturers.

Britain had been among the leaders in Europe in clamping down on the dangers of the free gifts after three recorded deaths and a series of hospital admissions, he said.

"But we very much welcome the action that is being taken by Brussels. There are no grounds for complacency. As the rules get tougher, we want to keep in the lead. We are taking no sort of relaxed view of this - we want to make sure that no child is at risk."

**Brewery to challenge beer-duty rise**

A family brewery is to mount a legal challenge against the Government's 1p-a-pint duty rise on beer, it emerged yesterday. Lawyers for Shepherd Neame are seeking a judicial review of Chancellor Gordon Brown's budget decision which they say has left British brewers even worse off in the battle against cheap continental beer imports.

The drinks industry has long campaigned against the high rate of duty - six-times that in France - imposed on home-made products and blamed for the closure of hundreds of pubs. The High Court will hear that under the Treaty of Rome, governments are obliged to harmonise duty rates with Europe and promote the single market.

**Blindness no obstacle to acting pair**

Two aspiring actors are this week preparing to start at one of Britain's most prestigious drama colleges even though one is blind and the other can barely see.

Ryan Kelly and Jamie Purvis fought off competition from 3,000 sighted actors to win two of 30 places in this year's intake at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

The pair - believed to be the first drama students with such serious sight problems - hope they are blazing a trail that will encourage more blind people to take to the stage. Jamie, 20, from Port Talbot in West Glamorgan, is hoping to follow in the footsteps of his hero, Oscar-winning fellow-Welshman Sir Anthony Hopkins.

**County mail on silent running**

A state-of-the-art electric car takes to the streets of Devon today as part of the county council's commitment to exploring the use of alternative fuels.

The electrically-powered Peugeot 106, which will deliver goods and internal mail in and around Exeter for a three week trial period, was "a glimpse of the future," said county environment director Edward Charlton.

The car, which has a range of 50 miles and has a top speed of 50 mph, takes six hours to fully charge from an ordinary mains socket.

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria ... \$5.40 Nlands ... £5.00  
Belgium ... £1.10 Italy ... £4.50  
Canada ... \$12.00 Malta ... £4.25  
Cyrus ... £1.20 Malta ... 43 cents  
Denmark ... £1.18 Norway ... Nkr20  
Ireland ... 45p Portugal ... £c2.25  
France ... £1.14 Spain ... £a3.00  
Germany ... DM4.5 Sweden ... Skr21  
Greece ... £1.45 Switzerland ... Skr4.00  
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BACK ISSUES  
Back issues of the independent are available from: Heron Newsagents, telephone 01986 840370.

## people



In memoriam: Elton John singing 'Candle in the Wind' at the funeral of his friend, Diana

**Elton's tribute to a princess storms to Number One**

Elton John's tribute single to Diana, Princess of Wales, shot to the top of the charts after just one day on sale, it was revealed yesterday.

"Candle in the Wind 1997" went platinum after selling more than 600,000 copies in just a few hours yesterday, as shoppers frantically snapped up every CD and cassette they could find.

The remarkable scenes have made it the fastest-selling single of all time and have won it the coveted number one slot with record-breaking speed, pipping the Princess's friend George Michael's new release "You Have Been Loved".

Up to 1,000 staff came in for a special Sunday shift at Mercury Records' main pressing plant in Blackburn and other centres around the country yesterday, in a massive effort to get another million copies into the stores. Additional supplies of the single - recorded for hours to be able to buy the £2.99 disc on its release day, and rationed had to be introduced after some late Saturday immediately after its first public performance at Diana's Westminster Abbey funeral - should be in the shops by the time doors open today.

Fleets of lorries were making deliveries around the country yesterday, and Mercury expects to have all 1.5 million advance orders in the shops by tomorrow.

Robert Partridge, a spokesman for Mercury, said:

"It has been an incredible few days and we have gone into completely uncharted territory. Around 1,000 people have been working on it. It's been a remarkable effort, which is still going on."

Initially, Mercury estimated that it would only be able to provide shops with 250,000 copies of the single on

the release day, but calculations at the end of a hectic day showed that workers and distributors had vastly surpassed expectations.

The single - a rewritten version of Elton's Seven-  
ties tribute to Marilyn Monroe - looks set to become Britain's biggest hit, beating Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas?", which sold 3.5 million.

It is expected to raise at least £10m for the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund and some music industry insiders have predicted it will stay at the top of the charts until Christmas.

Record stores do not yet know how many singles they will receive today, and there could be a repeat of Saturday's scenes, when shoppers rushed to snatch up all available copies. Hundreds of people queued for hours to be able to buy the £2.99 disc on its release day, and rationing had to be introduced after some late Saturday immediately after its first public performance at Diana's Westminster Abbey funeral - should be in the shops by the time doors open today.

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**Russia's Sinatra gets into politics his way**

A singer who has been called Russia's Frank Sinatra was elected to parliament yesterday, a few days after he bid farewell to his many fans in a concert televised live nationwide.

Iosif Kobzon will represent a Siberian region's parliament's lower house, Russian news agencies reported, citing officials in the Aksinsky Buryat district. He beat five other candidates, but official results were not available.

Kobzon ran for the State Duma in the last general elections, in December 1995, but was not elected. The seat later became available. Kobzon, who said he wanted to "leave the stage gracefully" when he turned 80, celebrated his birthday last week with a final Moscow concert.

For the past eight months he had been on a gruelling farewell tour billed as "I've Given All I've Got to Sing," which took him across the former Soviet Union.

Kobzon, who started out as a young soldier singing patriotic Soviet hymns, became one of Russia's richest and most controversial figures. Much like Sinatra, the Russian crooner has been dogged by accusations of having ties to organised crime figures.

AP - Moscow

**Police quizz road-rage solicitor on fraud charge**

Tim Robinson, the solicitor who represented "road-rage" killer Tracie Andrews was yesterday being quizzed by fraud investigators after spending a night in police cells.

Gloucester magistrates ruled at a special sitting yesterday that he could be detained for up to 36 hours for questioning over alleged misuse of public funds.

They granted a Serious Fraud Office application for the detention after a three-hour hearing.

Brian Head, solicitor for the defence, successfully applied for an order preventing publication of case details which could be prejudicial to his client. Mr Robinson is under arrest for the alleged aiding and abetting of false accounting in his firm and for conspiracy to defraud.

Gloucestershire police decided to give any details of his detention, but it was understood that Mr Robinson was likely to be released well in advance of the 4am detention limit today.

He was first arrested by police last month over allegations of Legal Aid fraud. He voluntarily attended Stroud police station for interview.

At the special court hearing, Jean Austin of the Serious Fraud Office made the detention application which was contested by

Mr Head. The police investigation centres on a three-year period when Mr Robinson's criminal law firm ran offices in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Swindon and Bristol.

In January 1995, the offices were raid in a co-ordinated police operation. They also visited Mr Robinson's home at Badgeworth, near Cheltenham, and the homes of staff members.

His client Tracie Andrews was jailed for life in July for the murder of her lover Lee Harvey. As she began her life sentence Mr Robinson said he would be appealing against her conviction.

AP - Moscow

**Do you want to hear a secret? asks Macca**

Sir Paul McCartney has spoken out about some of the secrets of his days as a Beatle - including how he slept with a prostitute and introduced Mick Jagger to cannabis.

In his new biography, *Many Years From Now*, serialised in *The Observer's "Life"* magazine yesterday, the musician told how he was introduced to cannabis by Bob Dylan, and then two years later gave Jagger his first joint at his London home.

"Funny, because everyone would have thought it would have been the other way around," said McCartney.

The book, due to be published next month, has been written by Barry Miles after hours of interviews with Sir Paul. Speaking of his nightlife in London in 1964, Sir Paul said: "The clubs were all more or less the same: birds and occasionally live music."

"The Bag o'Nails was my favourite. It was supposed to have been a hookers' hangout before, it probably was then too. But young, trendy hookers in miniskirts."

"Now I recall, I might have got asked for money one night after pulling some bird. I wouldn't pay, though, you know."

The book also gives insights into the successful Lennon and McCartney songwriting partnership, how they planned their days and worked together.

Sir Paul claimed he was introduced to pot by Dylan, he said, "that was rather a coup."

"It was like being introduced to meditation and given your mantra by Mahanishi. There was a certain status to it."

## briefing

## FINANCE

**Tax-payers to face fines of £500m for missed deadline**

Millions of taxpayers who have not returned their self-assessment forms face fines totalling £500m, an expert warned yesterday.

Up to two thirds of the 8 million earners on the new form of assessment have not yet filed in their forms as the deadline of 30 September approaches.

Peter Black, a former Inland Revenue deputy controller who has set up a self-assessment advisory company, Simplifax, said: "By the end of the month there will be absolutely no help available for those who find the new forms daunting and difficult to understand."

"This means that after 30 September revenue inspectors will not be able to tell you how much tax you will have to pay by 31 January next year." Penalties will start to come into force after 31 January, including £100 fines and surcharges. Mr Black also warned taxpayers not to panic and seek advice from disreputable firms. Tax advising is one of the few professions which is unregulated, Mr Black said, adding: "Taxpayers have no protection from 'cowboy' firms."

## SHOPPING

**Little profit in Sunday opening**

Sunday shopping has become part of the nation's weekend - but as more shops open to meet the demand, they are failing to find extra profits, according to a report published today.

Three years after Sunday trading was introduced, more than half of Britons take advantage of the law change, an annual survey found. Shopping on the Sabbath has overtaken other more traditional pastimes on the "day of rest"; only one in eight Britons regularly sits down to a family Sunday lunch.

The number of stores open for trading on Sundays has increased by 6 per cent in the past year, says the survey report for international property consultants Healey and Baker. Of the top 100 cities and towns, 97 per cent have more than 10 per cent of their shops open. But the average increase of profits was just over 1 per cent for the shops that open, while 45 per cent of retailers trading on Sunday reported that they had seen no additional profit at all.

## SOCIETY

**Kids really, really want to be rich**

Modern children are shameless materialists who value wealth above health and happiness, according to a survey out today.

Asked to name one wish, 40 per cent of the 7- to 14-year-olds polled by Fox Kids television network wanted to be rich, while only 4 per cent bought happiness and 4 per cent health.

The survey of more than 1,000 youngsters across the country found they hanker after the top designer labels, big houses, cars and televisions, and the Spice Girls are their top role models. Making money was the main aim in life among 38 per cent of the teenage boys surveyed, and 16 per cent wanted to win the lottery.

Half the boys said life would not be worth living without football and nearly as many - 47 per cent - found television essential to life. They relied off Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Armani as their favourite designer labels in clothes, and Adidas, Nike, Kickers and Reebok in footwear. Fox Kids managing director Rod Henwood said: "Kids today are increasingly adopting adult values and our challenge as a children's channel is to create a kids' world that entertains without corrupting them."

## WILDLIFE

**Warning over birds at risk on farms**

Wildlife experts today go to Brussels with a blunt warning that only a shake-up in farming policy can halt the decline in the bird population.



Rock steady: Noel Redding (left) Kathy Ettingham and Pete Townshend at the ceremony yesterday to dedicate the blue plaque

Photograph: John Lawrence

## Hendrix gets the blues (plaque, that is)

Pop stars from the past four decades gathered in London yesterday for the unveiling of a blue plaque to the legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix.

The first award of its kind to a rock musician took place at 23 Brook Street, Mayfair, where Hendrix lived from 1968-9 with Kathy Ettingham, who proposed the plaque.

It was unveiled by close friends Pete Townshend, of The Who, and Noel Redding, of Hendrix's band, The Experience, with a star-studded audience including Roger Daltrey, Jimmy Page, Ray Davies, Dave Gilmour, Brian Eno, Lemmy, and, representing the current generation, Primal Scream, Doogy and The Verve.

Hendrix spent his most successful years in Britain and it is where he initially came to fame. The Jimi Hendrix Experience had their first hit single with *Hey Joe* in December, 1966, following Hendrix's arrival from the United States in September of that year.

Hendrix died, aged 27, in 1970.

# Violent videos haunt children's minds

Violent scenes from *Alien* profoundly affected children

### Roger Dobson

Graphic scenes of screen violence stick in children's minds and have a far more profound effect on them than nudity, sex scenes or bad language, according to new research.

The eruption of an alien creature from a man's stomach in the film *Alien*, cockroaches coming out of a mouth in *Creshow* and a head bitten off and rolling away in *An American Werewolf in London* were, among the most frightening scenes children wanted to dismiss from their minds but

couldn't, a British Psychological Society conference was told yesterday.

Explicit violence was the source of most unwanted memories among children interviewed by researchers, and more than half described in detail a specific violent scene they had watched and could not dismiss from their thoughts.

Psychologist Glenn Cupit, senior lecturer at the University of South Australia, asked 1,500 children, mostly aged 10 and 11, to describe scenes from commercially available videos. He found that scenes of mu-

dity, genitalia, eroticism and bad language, frequently a target for censors, were seldom mentioned by the children. It was the films with scenes of violence, horror and dismemberment that dominated the list of unwanted memories.

Mr Cupit, who presented his findings yesterday to the BPS development psychology conference in Loughborough, said: "We may be concentrating on the wrong things. Violent scenes, which have the greatest impact on children, are not always the ones that adults fear are harmful. Children most of

ten report particularly persistent and unwelcome memories about violent scenes like people being cut up with chainsaws, being put through meat mincers and that sort of thing.

"Some scenes commonly thought to stimulate memory, such as nudity, sexual behaviour or insanity, do not affect as many children. These findings are important because they reveal what children themselves, rather than adults, identify as the types of violent video scenes which have a lasting effect."

He said one of the problems with tackling violence in videos

was that the moral high ground on censorship was held by the lobby for sexual censorship, which was more organised.

"There is the occasional outcry about violence after a particular event, but the pressure soon dies away. One of the problems is that legislators know that if they put restrictions on violence it will have a major impact on the (film and video) business," he said.

During the study, researchers found that a higher than expected proportion of young children had watched some of the most notoriously violent

films. *Evil Dead*, for example, considered one of the most violent available, was watched by three out of 10 children.

"The common perception of bullies as unpopular oafs lacking intelligence and social skills may be wrong and dangerous, according to research reported at the conference yesterday.

Bullies are often popular and manipulative masters of the social situation, said psychologist Jon Sutton and Professor Peter Smith of Goldsmith's College, London University, who interviewed around 200 children aged seven to 10.

### Viewers' fear factor

Almost two-thirds of adults said violence was their main concern about television, according to a Broadcasting Standards Commission report. Only 9 per cent said sex on television was their biggest concern. Lady Howe, the chairwoman, said: "The research tells us that 53 per cent of parents have had cause to switch off their televisions while viewing with children. In almost half of these cases it was because of the violence being portrayed."

# Veggies who can't resist the pleasures of the flesh

### Kathy Marks

The number of people renouncing meat has been increasing steadily for years, and accelerated in the wake of the BSE affair. But, according to a new survey, nearly half of adults who call themselves vegetarians secretly sneak off for burgers and bacon butties.

Research by Taylor Nelson AGB, a marketing company, concludes that while 7 per cent of British adults describe themselves as vegetarians, only 4 per cent have embraced an entirely meat-free diet. The research also reinforces previous surveys suggesting that a vegetarian diet is more attractive to women than to men. Five per cent of women said they abstained completely from meat and fish.

According to latest estimates, there are now three million vegetarians in Britain, which represents a 20 per cent increase over the past two years. Numbers are swelling by another 5,000 each week, with many new converts citing the beef scare as their main reason.

In addition, another 8 million people say they avoid red meat, while continuing to eat fish and poultry. Die-hard meat-eaters are to be found in strength north of the border; only 1.6 per cent of Scottish men have succumbed to vegetarianism.

While the vegetarian diet is more popular among women, the trend away from meat is reported to be rising more quickly among men. It is open to question, of course, whether these men give honest answers.

The private Wellman Clinic

said that men who ate little or no beef or lamb were prone to exhaustion and often had a pallid appearance. Steak lovers, on the other hand, had more iron in their blood and found it easier to stay fit.

But if the relative benefits to health of different diets remain disputable, the social advantages of vegetarianism appear more certain, particularly if the object of desire eats no meat.

About half of single vegetarians told researchers a few years ago that they would refuse even to consider going out with a meat-eater, no matter how desperate they were for company.

"You don't want to kiss someone with greasy pork fat on his mouth," sniffed one woman.

# I couldn't bear the cruelty'

## 'Is there any more salami?'

The idea that some vegetarians "cheat" by eating meat is a non-sense: there is no hard and fast line to be dictated or taken.

Intellectually, it would be possible to take a principled stand by refusing to eat beef or pork, or by eating fish on Fridays. I class myself as a vegetarian, an because I do not eat meat, will go out of my way to avoid it, even at the risk of causing embarrassment to myself and others.

But I do not take such a strong line against eating fish, and will eat it, if it avoids embarrassment for a host or hostess. I prefer not to eat any flesh, but sometimes make an exception for fish (and politicians).

Yet I wear leather shoes and belts, consume dairy produce like milk and cheese, and eat so-called free-range eggs. If that is hypocritical, then it is the result of having a principle. Only those without principles cannot be hypocritical.

The degrees of vegetarianism can be as different as the causes. I know vegetarians who do not like meat because they do not like the taste, when it has

it's my choice, and there are no rules, writes

**Anthony Bevins**

taste. Others will eat white meat, like chicken, but not red meat, or vice versa, for the same reason.

I turned against meat in my mid-twenties because I could not bear the cruelties involved in meat production; I did not wish to be responsible for the evident pain inflicted by men on animals to satisfy my appetite.

It helped that my daughter is a vegetarian, and she advised on diet and protein matters that had not previously bothered me. She also assured me – quite rightly – that not eating meat would cause me no harm.

It is a personal choice and, as such, it is tailored to each individual, by each individual. I suspect that meat, unlike tobacco, is not addictive, and I do not think it is as carcinogenic, but if vegetarians occasionally eat meat, that is their choice. Cheating has nothing to do with it.

I am not a proper vegetarian, as carnivorous friends gleefully point out, when they think they have "caught" me out eating parma ham, bacon or sausages.

Why am I "allowed" to eat those? I look round to make sure the Vegetarian Society Police are not watching, I was not watching. "Because I like them," I say. "Besides, I am sure it's all free-range pig."

In fact, the truth is that what I fail to be is a pescatarian, not a vegetarian, because I eat fish. But most people would think I was talking about star signs. I have always been a moral relativist.

I don't know if animals have rights, but if they do I am sure that less injustice is done by killing fish than cattle. There are hierarchies of both sentience and cruelty.

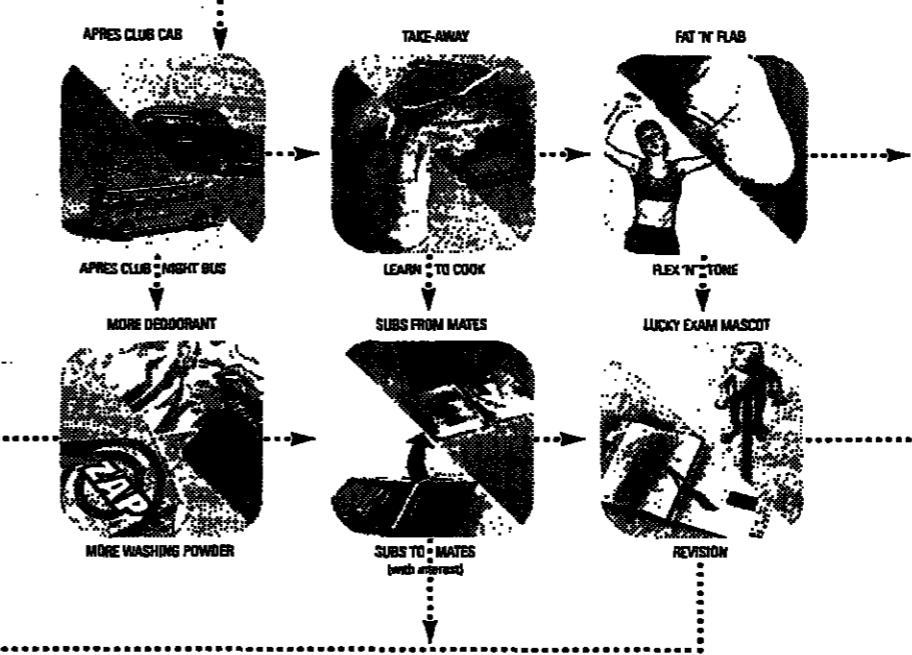
Some time after I gave up meat (most of the time) I was heartened to be told that fish don't feel pain.

Apparently they don't need to, because they don't have memories, so pain is of no use to them. They simply respond by reflex to external stimuli.

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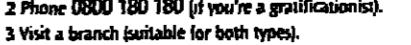
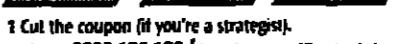
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4 news

# Fathers seen as a nuisance at births

Kim Sengupta

Once it was considered to be a gesture of New-Manhood: husbands and boyfriends being there at the birth of their babies. But now they are all doing it, and according to some, the time may have come to get expectant fathers out of the delivery rooms.

A survey of 1,000 new mothers showed that while as many as 84 per cent of women had their partner present throughout labour, only 59 per cent said the men had been "supportive".

Others were said to be more a hindrance than a help. Some are sick, some traumatised, and some pass out requiring medical treatment themselves, distracting nurses and midwives at crucial points in the delivery.

The report also found that 46 per cent of the new mothers questioned did not find midwives supportive, 72 per cent had not met the midwives before the delivery, and 81 per cent had used an electronic fetal monitoring machine.

The study was carried out by the National Childbirth Trust in conjunction with *Practical Parenting* magazine, and aimed to show how much progress had been made in areas of pregnancy and maternity care after the publication in 1993 of the government report *Changing Childbirth*.

A spokeswoman for the NCT said: "The revelation about men in the labour room – and how women felt about it – was one of the more surprising results."

John Friend, a consultant at the Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, and a spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, said: "It is now very commonplace for male partners to be around at birth

and some may regard it as their right to be there. It is seen as the thing to do because friends and colleagues had done it. They may not have examined the possible consequences of seeing a delivery, particularly a difficult one."

"It is obviously good for women to have support during labour, but it is hardly helpful for them if their partners get distressed while they are there. There are also, of course, many unhappy relationships between partners, and this unhappiness can be transferred to the wards and create added strains."

Sheila Kitzinger, an author and authority on childbirth, said: "When you have a situation where 72 per cent of the women had not met the midwives before childbirth there are bound to be strains when the partner comes in as well. I am not blaming the midwives for this, it is a problem with the system."

"Giving birth is a very private psycho-sexual experience. If you have a team of strangers present, and machines attached to the mother, it can be very off-putting. If this was happening while you were having sex, you would never have an orgasm."

Beverley Beech, honorary chair of the Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services said: "Our president said recently, jokingly, perhaps the time has come to campaign to get the fathers out of the delivery rooms."

"In many cases men are not prepared for the experience of the delivery, and are taken into the delivery room as a bit of spare part ... when things go wrong the women often blame their partners for not being supportive. But the men themselves are often very distressed and traumatised. They feel disempowered."



Cutting crew: Greenham veterans and local people dismantling the fence yesterday as the former US air base was returned to common land

Photograph: Martin Hayhow

## Greenham women celebrate the final victory with garden shears and muscle power

Dozens of people joined forces yesterday to pull down the 30-year-old fence surrounding Greenham Common, marking a final victory for peace campaigners.

There were cheers of jubilation from crowds as they gathered, armed with garden cutters, and chopped their way through the 8ft high wire fence

which surrounds the former US air base in Berkshire.

Large sections of the fence were pushed to the ground around the 800-acre site which has now been returned to common land.

The momentous day rapidly became a large community event as kites and hot-air balloons circled the site and local

residents joined council officials to walk on the land which has been fenced off for 50 years.

Greenham Common was the site of a continuous women's protest from 1981 until the final American cruise missiles were removed in March 1991. The demonstrations ended with the closure of the base.

Jean Gardner, chairman of Newbury District Council, said:

"Everyone was in fine spirits as we cut through sections of the fence. Lots of local people came along with cutters and cheered as the fences came down."

"I do not think that people actually believed that the fence would be cut down until they finally saw it. Many walked onto the land to survey the scene for the first time in 50 years. This is an historic day for the people of Newbury as we take the first step to returning Greenham Common back to the people."

"Already 600,000 tonnes of concrete has been dug up and very shortly we will begin the removal of 8 million gallons of fuel stores." The two year restoration programme will create the largest area of open heathland in Berkshire.

A spokesman from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) said: "The final removal of the fences at Greenham Common and its return to common land is a day



for celebrating and a testimony to the efforts of hundreds of thousands of peace campaigners.

"The Greenham women have been an inspiration to people around the world for their energy, determination and focus. The CND now looks forward to the day when the fences come down at all nuclear bases and installations."

The Newbury MP David Rendell, who helped to pull down the fence, said: "This is a truly historic day. After 50 years Greenham Common is coming back to the people of Newbury. Where once the bombers flew, the people will now be able to walk in peace."

"This is the end of a long campaign by local people to have this area restored for open access. For some, this has been a 50-year campaign and everyone locally will be overjoyed that the area will not be an ordinary piece of public open space but a very special nature conservation area."

The land will gradually be opened up to the public as each part of it is made safe.

## Vicar tough on crime faces chastisement

Kathy Marks

A vicar who called for thieves who stole from his village church to have their hands cut off has found himself facing chastisement. The Rev Robert McConachie has been summoned by his bishop, who is not amused by his invoking the Biblical sanction.

After the theft of a set of 100-year-old figurines of the 12 Apostles, Mr McConachie surprised his congregation at St Dunstan's, in West Peckham, near Maidstone, Kent, last week by reciting St Mark, Chapter 9, Verse 43: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off."

"It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into Hell into the fire that never shall be quenched."

The Londonderry-born vicar suggested that a state-appointed body should be created to perform the amputations, and proposed that only one hand be chopped off initially, to see if it achieved the desired effect.

The diocesan spokesman said: "The meeting will be a private matter. Bishop Michael is very concerned for his diocese, of which St Dunstan's Church is part."

The figurines have now been returned to the church, after being tracked down to an antiques dealer in north London.



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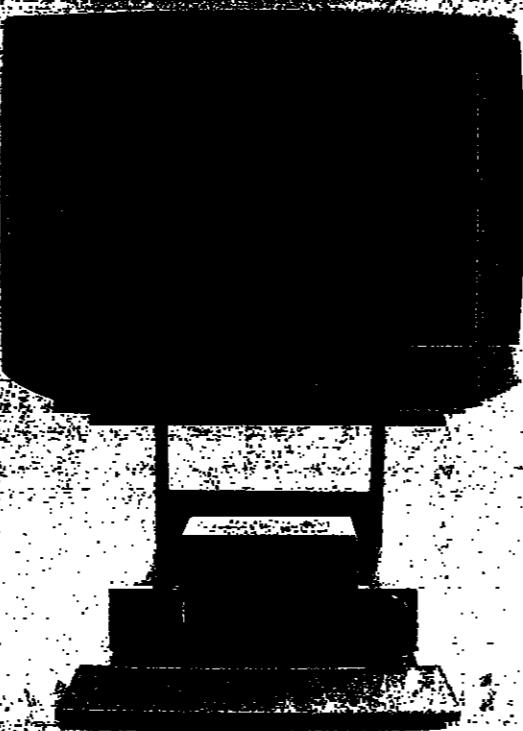
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## news

# Literacy drive brings extra lessons for primary teachers

Lucy Ward

Every primary school teacher will receive extra training in teaching reading and writing, under an ambitious Government programme to drive up literacy standards.

Schools, education authorities, and the Government, together with parents and

employers, will all have a role in a nation-wide effort to boost reading, according to the National Literacy Strategy, published today.

The detailed five-year agenda, which confirms the place of literacy at the heart of the Government's education programme, will lead to unprecedented consistency

The strategy, devised by a Literacy Task Force appointed by Labour while in opposition, is designed to achieve the Government's ambitious targets of 80 per cent of all 11-year-olds reading at the standard expected for their age by 2002.

Last year, only 56 per cent

achieved that level.

Work on the demanding pro-

gramme will begin immediately, as local education authorities start devising action plans for raising literacy standards in primary schools.

Schools will become directly involved next summer, when each will send their head teacher, a governor, and a designated literacy co-ordinator for two days' training in teach-

ing reading and writing, to be passed on to all staff.

From autumn 1998, when schools are expected to introduce a reading hour, those which have furthest to go to

meet the literacy target will receive extra intensive support from specially appointed consultants.

To back up the programme,

the 1998-99 school year will be designated "National Year of Reading", when parents will be urged through media campaigns to help their children read.

Funding for the strategy, which will be monitored in schools and LEAs by Ofsted, will come from a fund given to local authorities for education training.

The schools minister Stephen Byers said the strategy provided a practical agenda for action. "Every primary school in the land has an important part to play in our national drive to raise standards. Every parent and employer will welcome our determination to ensure our children have the literacy skills they will need in the 21st century."

# Hague attack over funeral backfires

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

An attack by William Hague on the "shabby" way in which Tony Blair exploited the funeral of Princess Diana backfired last night, after a senior royal source praised Number 10's "very positive contribution".

Mr Hague told BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* programme: "The thing that has annoyed me most of all, and it has to be said at some stage, is the leaking of advice given to the Royal Family, the apparent briefings to the press, that advice was given to the Royal Family that puts the Government in a good light and the Royal Family in a bad light."

"Now that's shabby politics and it's bad government and it's no way to support the Royal Family in the future."

"I can't believe that that has been done with the sanction or authority of the Prime Minister. Prime ministers give confidential advice to the Royal Family."

## Bodyguard says driver was sober

The British bodyguard assigned to protect Diana, Princess of Wales, during her romance with Dodi Fayed, has insisted there was no clue on the night they died that their driver Henri Paul was drunk. Alexander Wingfield spent about two hours immediately before the fatal crash in Paris with Mr Paul, 41, whose post-mortem blood tests proved he was more than three times over the drink-driving limit. Mr Wingfield has told BBC1's *Panorama*: "I never saw the guy drink anything, I mean he was French, he'd been on duty. The French drink wine at every meal, but there was nothing in his demeanour that would suggest to me that he was drunk."

"He was exactly the same as he was in the afternoon, just a nice guy and he was sober." In a programme, entitled *Diana, The Last Day*, to be screened tonight, Mr Wingfield said of the accident: "If anyone is to blame it should be whoever was hounding the car that night because there had been an escalation throughout the whole period we were away."

He said that, ironically, Diana had been concerned for the safety of the photographers earlier in the day. She feared they might fall in front of the cars.

ly, but he should prevent it happening at any time."

A Government source said last night: "It is a pack of lies". And although the Palace was embarrassed at any suggestion of it becoming embroiled in political controversy, the Royal source said there had been no question of the Prime Minister hijacking the event.

Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, held two No 10 briefings for members of the parliamentary Lobby in the week before the funeral.

With the prior knowledge and approval of the Palace, his initial message was that the Palace and the families had decided to break with tradition by excluding some of the great and the good from the funeral guest-list.

After the press had started to attack the Royal Family for being out of touch, the second briefing concentrated on the message that some of the "common touch" ideas for the funeral

such as the invitation for representatives of the Princess's favourite charities to join the funeral procession from St James's had been initiated by the Palace.

The media was also attacked for treating the grief-stricken Royal Family as little more than "extras" in a media event.

One source said yesterday that it had not been a matter of No 10 breaking confidentiality; the Palace had asked for help in getting the messages out, and No 10 had come to its assistance.

As for presenting No 10 in a good light, to the detriment of the Royal Family, No 10 went to extreme lengths to promote the role of the Palace – at times, frustrating reporters who were desperate for copy which was critical of the Royals.

Mr Hague said: "The Princess did not belong to one political party. If Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was chairing a special committee on proposals for a permanent memorial, then politicians from other parties should also be represented, he added.

Earlier, reports said that both Prince Charles and Mr Blair were planning to abolish the Civil List, in return for the Queen keeping her £84m annual income from the Crown Estates, which is at present handed to the Government, were categorically denied by both the Palace and Downing St.

However, the reports rekindled the debate about the future of the monarchy. The Prince of Wales has let it be known he wants to use the current climate to encourage major changes in the role of the Royal Family, according to sources close to the Palace. The Prince is also said to be determined that his sons, William and Harry, should have an upbringing more in tune with contemporary society.

Potentially historic political talks will be convened in Belfast this morning amid uncertainty on when the Ulster Unionist Party will enter the building for negotiations which will involve Sinn Fein.

Most participants and observers believe that David Trimble will lead his Ulster Unionists into the talks, but few think this will happen today.

Instead, the first item on the agenda is likely to be a complaint from the Rev Ian Paisley that Sinn Fein is a democratic party and should therefore be expelled from the exercise.

Most participants believe the talks will not be long delayed by the censure move, since it seems unlikely that he will appear in person to press the case in the presence of Sinn Fein.

However, both the British and Irish governments and others taking part are likely to express their disapproval of last week's statement by an IRA spokesman that the terrorist organisation "have some problems with" the Mitchell principles of espousing non-violence and democracy.

The talks are agenda item 2A of the opening plenary session, the point at which they have been for many months.

To move from this point requires the assent of Mr Trimble. If, as most expect, he does not appear today, then the other participants are likely to busy

themselves with a range of bilateral and trilateral meetings.

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Mr Trimble has spoken of varying the structure of the talks, presumably to ensure that for the moment at least he and his delegates do not sit down face-to-face with Sinn Fein.

More than 80 per cent of the speakers at Saturday's meeting of the executive were in favour

of entering talks. This mirrored findings of an opinion poll last week which recorded 93 per cent of respondents being in favour of talks.

Northern Ireland political development minister Paul Murphy yesterday told Sky television: "My belief is that the talks will be opening a new era in Northern Ireland politics. I hope and pray that all parties in Northern Ireland will be involved in those talks."

Mr Murphy added later: "I don't believe for one second that the Unionist Party will abdicate its responsibility, in the words of Ken Maginnis yesterday, to put their point of view across in any talks and process."

"At least the Ulster Unionist Party has said it will participate."

He encouraged them to join face-to-face talks: "My own view is that it is by far the best thing for the parties to be together in the same room."

# Ulster talks on brink of new dawn

Unionists set wheels in motion for direct negotiation with Sinn Fein. David McKittrick reports

However, both the British and Irish governments and others taking part are likely to express their disapproval of last week's statement by an IRA spokesman that the terrorist organisation "have some problems with" the Mitchell principles of espousing non-violence and democracy.

The talks are agenda item 2A of the opening plenary session, the point at which they have been for many months.

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# Minister defends £17,000 pay rises for Cabinet

Anthony Bevins

The Government yesterday defended its decision to go ahead with plans to increase Cabinet salaries from April while curbing public sector pay for people such as nurses and teachers.

After the election, Cabinet ministers agreed to postpone their pay rise for a year – when they are due to get an increase of £17,209, or 19.6 per cent, taking them to £105,000.

A Government source said yesterday that any comparison between nurses and ministers was "invidious". and Stephen

Byers, Minister for Education, said extra money was being made available for education, to be spent on recruiting more teachers, books and equipment.

Referring to a comment made by teachers' leader Nigel de Gruchy, Mr Byers said: "It's disappointing that the first thing a general secretary of a teacher union does is threaten that they're going to go on strike, when in fact we've had the first tranche of new money coming into the education service for many years."

He told GMTV's *Sunday Programme* that more than

£1bn extra was being pumped into education over the next two years. He said the Department for Education and Employment had already submitted evidence to the pay review body, "that there should be a new category of teacher called the advanced skills teachers".

This would provide targeted rewards for the best teachers in the system, to keep them in the profession and to stop them moving out of the classroom and into administration.

"They can dedicate themselves to improving the quality of education our children receive by excellent classroom teaching," Mr Byers said.

"What we're saying is that there is new money for education. We're going to dedicate that to employ more teachers, to provide better books and equipment and improve the environment in our schools. That's the real world."

"That's what parents want. They would say, 'why pay double-figure increases for teachers?'" which is what the unions have submitted. And you know, most teachers would recognise that's the reality as well."

The fact that Labour minis-

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## DAILY POEM

On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me, Which a Fellow Had Just Shot At  
By Robert Burns  
Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,  
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;  
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,  
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!  
Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,  
The bitter little that life remains:  
No more the thickening bracken and verdant plains  
To thee shall home, or food, or pasture yield.  
Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wasted rest,  
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!  
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,  
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom press.

Off as by winding Nith I, musing, wait  
The sober eve, or haul the cheerful dawn,  
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,  
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

This week's poems come from *The Faber Book of Beasts*: an anthology of "some of the best poems in English about the creatures who share our planet", edited by Paul Muldoon (Faber, £14.99).

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**Motoring:** Britain's environment agency encourages employees to get behind the wheel, while the EU turns to pedestrians' safety

# Green watchdog drives staff mad

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

The environmental watchdog run by the Government is in thrall to the car culture, claim some of the regulator's staff. The Environment Agency is aggressively promoting its own car-leasing scheme among almost half of its 9,000 employees, with claims of "worry-free motoring".

The more on-the-job mileage the employees do, the larger and more powerful a car the staff members are entitled to.

"There are, of course, advantages to the individual in having a lease car, especially as it is available for private use," says an explanatory booklet sent to *The Independent* by a disgruntled staffer.

"Employees will be free of the worry of road tax, insurance, maintenance and unexpected and expensive repair bills."

The agency has no mileage allowance for using bicycles on work journeys, nor any loan scheme to encourage bike purchase. It has 1,715 of its own vehicles and only a few dozen bicycles used by its water bailiffs.

It gives its staff no incentives or instructions to use public

transport rather than cars. Furthermore, a growing number of the watchdog's many offices in England and Wales are in edge-of-town or rural locations, badly served or completely missed by buses and trains.

The leasing scheme is open to any member of staff doing at least 5,000 miles a year on business. The employee has to pay 29 per cent of the leasing cost, and gets a mileage allowance for work-related journeys. He or she can use the car for up to 15,000 private miles each year and can take it overseas.

As well as covering insurance and garage bills, the lease scheme offers a replacement in the event of breakdown, theft or accident. Staff who join get a new car of their choice, which they can swap for another new vehicle after four years or 30,000 miles.

The agency sees the scheme as a money-saver – it is cheaper than letting employees use their own cars for work journeys and claiming a higher mileage allowance. It also ensures that staff drive around in vehicles with smog-curbing catalytic converters rather than badly tuned, highly polluting old bangers.

Driving force: A Mercedes C-class (above) and the Ford Mondeo – both were tested for 'pedestrian friendliness'

7,000 net



Smog culture: A cyclist dodges the city traffic among the tightly packed cars and double-deckers of a busy London street; the Environment Agency is offering a car-leasing scheme to any employee clocking up more than 5,000 business miles per year

and waste dumps scattered around the country, agency staff could never do their jobs using only public transport and bicycles.

But some staff have been writing to the agency's internal paper to complain about what they see as pro-car policies. Douglas Pauley, from the North East Region, says it "seems hypocritical and unnecessary".

But in the same latest issue the agency's director of personnel, Giles Duncan, responds in a way which will have all cyclists gritting their teeth. "I admire people who cycle to work – they must realise, though, that not everyone can. Nor are we going to send our pollution inspectors wobbling off on a bike to visit ICI. So let's keep our sense of proportion."

To seduce staff members into joining, it is offering a "holiday" on their share of the lease costs of up to 14 months, worth a saving of more than £1,000. So far up to 2,000 staff have joined, but about the same number still use their own cars.

The most questionable part of the scheme is the way it allows staff with the highest mileage to have the most gas-guzzling, greenhouse-gas producing cars. Those doing at least 15,000 miles a year are entitled to a petrol engine up to 2,000cc or a diesel up to 2,500cc. Between 15,000 and 10,000 miles the maximum is an 1,800cc petrol engine. Under 10,000 miles it is 1,600cc petrol, or 1,900cc diesel.

A spokeswoman for the agency said it felt staff spending long hours on motorways needed larger, more powerful cars. "This was done on comfort and safety grounds.

She said that in monitoring and regulating industry, rivers

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## international

## Russians plan floating nuclear plant

Phil Reeves  
Moscow

A floating nuclear power-station – the world's first – is to be built by Russia in the Arctic, despite concern about the damage to the region inflicted by years of atomic-weapons testing, the reckless dumping and storage of radioactive materials, and fall-out from the Chernobyl disaster.

The Russian government has confirmed it plans to locate the plant on a vessel in Pevk, a remote and sparsely populated port town in Russia's Far East, 215 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

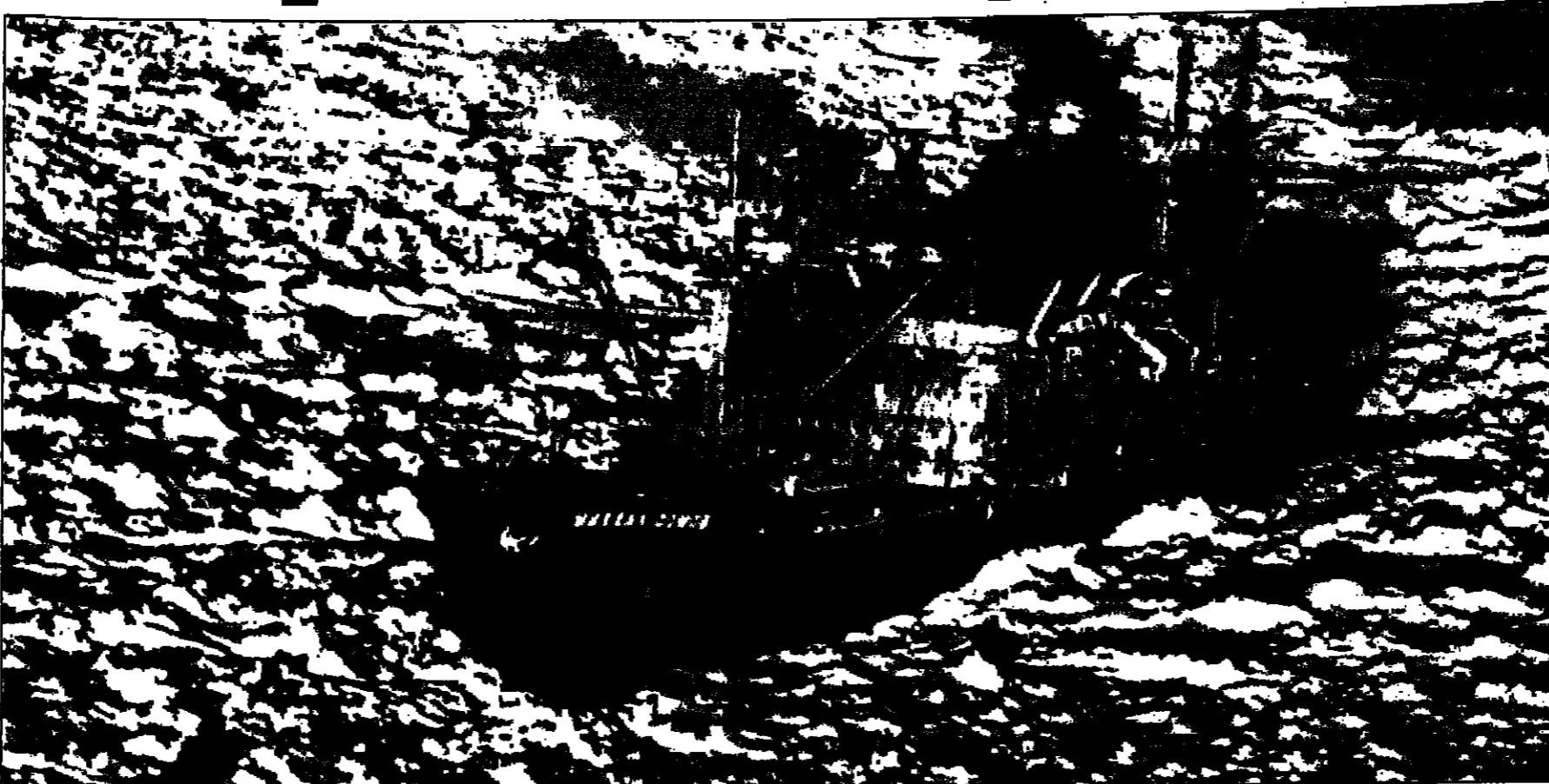
The \$254m (£150m) station will be powered by two pressurised-water reactors adapted from Russian nuclear-powered icebreakers, a fleet which has long been cited by Western safety experts as a source of severe environmental threat.

Every 13 years the plant will be towed by barge to Murmansk, near the Finnish border – a journey of 2,500 miles, which will take it from one end of Russia to the other – for a refit and to reload with fuel.

The project drew immediate condemnation from Greenpeace in Moscow. "This is very threatening to the environment," said Andrei Sinyakov, a spokesman. "Any nuclear waste that ends up in the sea will be distributed more quickly than on the earth itself."

The plan is certain to arouse fears about what would happen if the power-plant sank. It would not be the first vessel laden with radioactive material to do so; in 1989 the Soviet nuclear submarine *Komsomolets* went down in the sea 300 miles off Norway after a fire on board.

It had nuclear fuel in its reactor and nuclear warheads on board, but both Russian and international



surveys found no evidence of substantial contamination.

The Pevk project comes amid international anxiety about Russia's nuclear-power programme, which has been reactivated after coming to a standstill following the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Western and Russian scientists are alarmed about the lack of safety standards in Russia's nuclear fleet (it has more than 200 nuclear-powered submarines) and within its 99 nuclear facilities, including 29 nuclear power-stations.

Ageing and inadequate equipment, dangerous storage, a lack of safety consciousness and an absence of effective independent regulatory bodies top the list of concerns. So does the lack of funds; in July, nuclear workers from four power stations grew so desperate about pay

arrears that they marched to Moscow from the Smolensk nuclear power-plant, a 400-mile journey that took two weeks.

Russia's Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) says the floating station has been approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It argues the plant is needed to replace a far more costly, 40-year-old coal-powered station, for

which 100,000 tons of coal have to be shipped every year. The fact that the region will mostly supply Chukotka, is rapidly depopulating but has not derailed the plan; in the past four years half the 12,300 population of Pevk have left.

The Russians – who have been fiercely criticised for dumping nuclear waste in the Kara and Barents seas

and the Sea of Japan – say spent nuclear fuel will be kept on board the floating station, and not dumped. Such assurances may not convince environmentalists worried by the level of pollution in the Arctic, which has been contaminated by nuclear weapons tests, releases from nuclear fuel reprocessing plants and Chernobyl fall-out.

This year, a report commissioned

Cold comfort: A Russian icebreaker at work. Reactors from atomic-powered vessels will be used for the new power-station. Photograph: AP



by eight Arctic nations, including Russia, warned that the region's ecological system was far more vulnerable to radioactive contamination than elsewhere. It identified a "large number" of radioactive sources in the region, including storage of spent nuclear fuel, decommissioned nuclear submarines and nuclear reactors.

The Russians say the Pevk station – which is to stand in the east Siberian sea – is the first of its kind. It may not be the last; if they can raise the money they want to build two more.

Claims by Russia's former security chief, Alexander Lebed, that Russia has lost track of scores of tactical nuclear weapons were partly supported yesterday by his former deputy, Vladimir Denisov, an ex-deputy head of the Security Council, said an investigation last year had been unable to rule out that small nuclear bombs were left behind in former Soviet republics.

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# Date is set for the great euro currency merger

Katherine Butler  
Mondorf-les-Bains,  
Luxembourg

Europe's finance ministers have taken a crucial step on the road to the single European currency, by agreeing at the weekend that the rates at which German marks, French francs and other currencies joining the Economic and Monetary Union will convert to Euros, will be announced next May.

This will bring forward a key piece of the EMU jigsaw by eight months and will sharply increase pressure on Britain to finally decide whether to join the common currency during the first wave in January 1999.

The move is a pre-emptive strike against potentially damaging market turbulence once the list of countries qualifying for EMU is announced in May, and reflects a growing political determination to ensure that the single currency starts on time.

In talks at the Luxembourg spa resort of Mondorf-les-Bains, ministers agreed the identity of the first batch of EMU entrants and the conversion parities to apply from 1 January 1999 will be announced simultaneously. This is what brings forward a major piece of the EMU jigsaw. "From the time of the announcement we will *de facto* have a piece of monetary union in place," said Hans Tietmeyer, the president of the Bundesbank.

It had always been assumed that the announcement on exchange rate parities would come only on the eve of the EMU starting date, when currencies will be irrevocably locked.

Yves-Thibault de Silguy, EU commissioner for monetary affairs, predicted the early announcement would enhance the credibility of the EMU timetable by warning financial speculators that their scope to

gamble on likely conversion parities between May 1998 and January 1999 will be limited.

How the rates will be determined remains unresolved. The likeliest option is to use central rates within the EU's currency grid, the ERM.

The weekend's important and highly symbolic decision, coupled with improving prospects for economic recovery in France and Germany, mean hopes are higher than they have been for months that a delay in the EMU timetable can be avoided.

Britain therefore faces intensified pressure to step up preparations for the impact on both sterling and business of a Euro launch in less than 16 months.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, repeated at the weekend that the Government is committed to keeping Britain's options open. But his approach to the talks,

significantly more constructive than that of the Tories, have fuelled speculation in Mondorf that Tony Blair's government is positioning itself for early second-wave membership if EMU is seen to be working.

Mr Brown announced in Luxembourg that the Government wants a "vigorous debate" in Britain on the preparations for EMU, to warn business and consumers that "in or out" they will be affected.

This recognition from the British government that EMU is no longer in doubt was being seen by some EU diplomats as further evidence of a significant shift in the British attitude.

Britain's more positive strategy is partly influenced by the fear that the United Kingdom could be politically sidelined as EMU-participating countries, led by the French and Germans, start to collaborate more closely on a wide range of economic policy issues from 1999.



Flag day: The Solidarnosc banner dominates the scene on the hill of the Jasna Gora monastery in Czestochowa where 200,000 people gathered for a workers' pilgrimage before Polish elections this week

Photograph: AFP

## Germany wants its money back

Katherine Butler

Germany and the Netherlands have told other European governments they want their money back.

Theo Waigel, the German finance minister used the first round of talks on what will happen to EU finances as the bloc expands into Eastern Europe, to fire the opening shots in what promises to become a bitter row. He was backed by Gerrit Zalm, the Dutch minister who went so far as to threaten to veto enlargement if the net contributors to the £60bn annual budget are not given a fairer deal.

The move threatens the special budget rebate won by Margaret Thatcher for Britain in 1984 when she shocked fellow EU leaders by thumbing the table and demanding that the UK, one of the smallest direct beneficiaries of EU handouts, should have its cash returned. Clearly concerned that Britain's rebate could now come under scrutiny, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, called instead at the weekend for a radical reduction in spending on agriculture. "The debate must start to focus on whether money is being properly used," he said.



Theo Waigel: Wants to end Germany's paymaster role

member states pay in up to 1.27 per cent of their GDP. German reunification led to a big increase in the size of German GDP and a corresponding increase in its EU dues. Among the net contributors, Germany claims to pay around 60 per cent of the bills.

Now, desperate to slash the country's huge public deficit in time to qualify for monetary union in 1999, Bonn is casting around for every last pence.

Mr Zalm, meanwhile, who insists his country is not even among the five richest EU nations, circulated figures at the meeting claiming the Netherlands pays most in terms of *per capita* income. But the Dutch figures were dismissed by officials from poorer countries as "lies" because they include millions of pounds in customs duties which the Netherlands, one of the EU's biggest transit countries, receives on imports destined for other countries.

Germany and the Netherlands have enlisted support from newcomer Sweden which also wants a root-and-branch budget reform.

But Jacques Santer, the EU Commission President, reminded the bigger countries that

the benefits or costs of membership of the EU could not be quantified purely in terms of the budget. The modernisation of Athens airport, he pointed out, was paid for out of the EU's regional fund but the construction

contracts went to Dutch and German firms.

Mr Santer has now promised to bring forward an objective assessment of each country's payments and receipts from the Brussels budget.

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## Hizbullah rejoices in Israel's revenge

Robert Fisk  
Beirut

Only a week after the Hizbullah's leader, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, displayed parts of a dead Israeli soldier killed in southern Lebanon and offered to exchange them for guerrilla bodies in Israeli hands, the Israeli army has killed Nasrallah's eldest son during a confrontation in the south of the country.

In an unprecedented announcement, the Hizbullah themselves announced that 18-year-old Hadi Nasrallah was shot along with two of his colleagues near the zone that Israel occupies north of its border. Within 24 hours, two more Israelis were killed in apparent retaliation.

Sayed Nasrallah addressed a rally of 2,000 of his supporters on Saturday afternoon, addressing what he called his "pride" in his son's death. "I thank God and praise him for his ultimate grace and kindness in choosing a martyr from my family," he said.

The Hizbullah emphasised that no special attention would be paid to Hadi Nasrallah's

body in the list of dead guerrillas whom they want returned to Lebanon for burial.

First news of the man's identity and fate was brought to Beirut by the lone Hizbullah survivor of the raid against one of Israel's military positions inside Lebanon.

But Nasrallah later identified his son from a videotape taken of two of the Hizbullah dead in the mortuary at Marjayoun, the town north of the Israeli frontier.

The two Israelis killed on Saturday morning were blown up by a roadside bomb left by the Hizbullah east of Tyre. One of the soldiers died instantly and the other died later from his wounds.

Yesterday's explosion followed just two days after the Israeli attacked the Lebanese army east of Sidon - killing six of its soldiers - in retaliation for the Lebanese army's role in the virtual annihilation of an Israeli unit attempting to ambush the Hizbullah near Sidon last month.

Lebanese troops are now under orders to fire at any Israeli soldiers inside the country

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The marines had been invited to Cape Town for a regatta celebrating the 75th anniversary of the South African navy. German aircrews are allowed to take partners on one trip a year because they are rarely at home.

"We can only assume that the plane has crashed and that all 24 passengers on board are dead," the minister, Volker Rühe, said in Bonn. On board were 12 marines, 10 crew and the wives of two crew members.

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arts

# Nothing going on but the songs



Jaded Jack Flash: Liam Gallagher eschews rock 'n' roll antics (on stage) and lets his voice do the talking

Last Saturday saw the Last Night of the Proms and the first night of the Royal Opera's exile at the Barbican. **Robert Cowan** and **Edward Seckerson** were at the respective venues...

## PROMS

### Verdi Requiem; Last Night

Royal Albert Hall, London / R3

Between Hyde Park and the Royal Albert Hall, upwards of 40,000 people sang their sorrows away as candles flickered, lanterns shone and we all huddled from what Terry Wogan had mischievously described as a "gentle zephyr". At mid-afternoon, police on horseback surveyed the lengthening queues and crane-mounted speakers kept Mozart on a low burn. By 5.30, the Park was at least half full and Ed Stewart provided panto-style links between the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, the Classic Buskers (and the fastest *Marriage of Figaro* overture you've ever heard), an irrepressible George Melly (dressed in red) and the Themes Valley Chorus.

Heathrow-bound jets eavesdropped from on high, the strengthening gusts bombarded the microphones and as dusk fell, so did the tempera-

ture. As to the main concert and the first-half "link-up" with Radio 2 (they actually relayed the whole concert), Wogan proved an affable compere, easing a course from orchestral Wagner and Johann Strauss through rapturously received solos by Michael Ball, supple Rodrigo from guitarist John Williams and a neat dash of Scott Joplin from Joshua Rifkin. Robin Stapleton and the BBC Concert Orchestra gave us bracing Denza and Eric Coates (a jaunty reminder of nearby Knightsbridge), but credit for the climax must go to composer Bill Whelan, members of the Riverdance Com-

pany and thundering drums. They were simply sensational. Wogan reminded us that the Park had been transformed from a grieving place into a joyous scene, though when Michael Ball stilled us with "Love Changes Everything" and "You'll Never Walk Alone", the candles seemed to burn even brighter. Such was the mood of the place, and yet the video link with Andrew Davis and his BBC forces at the Royal Albert Hall prompted a wild waving of arms and a fervent welter of patriotic singing. Earlier, Wayne Marshall swung high and low with Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm* variations, and back in the Park harpist Larry Adler summoned the composer's piano roll as accompanist for *Porgy's Summertime*. John Adams's momentarily inappropriate *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* was replaced by Diana's favourite "Jupiter", but at the previous night's Prom you would have heard what was described as "her favourite piece of classical music", Verdi's Requiem Mass.

Although Andrew Davis's Last Night speech commemorated Princess Diana, Mother Teresa and Sir Georg Solti, it was appropriate that this penultimate Prom should honour their memories with a work that they both loved dearly.

Top names appearing include:

Martin Amis  
Richard Baker  
Louis de Bernières  
Alan Clark  
Jonathan Dimbleby  
John Hegley  
Ian Hislop  
P D James  
Penelope Keith  
Hanif Kureishi  
Ian McEwan  
Anthony Minghella  
Edna O'Brien  
Michael Palin  
Will Self  
Rick Stein  
Rose Tremain

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nally been scheduled to conduct the Requiem, but on Friday night Sir Colin Davis took the reins for a performance that, although possibly less elemental than Solti's would have been, was warmly communicative and climaxed to an overwhelmingly powerful account of the *Liberation*. Davis's approach was weighty, malleable (plenty of flexibility, tempo-wise) and usefully accommodating to his singers. The gentle "Introit" suggested deep inward communion; the *Die Irae*'s bass drum had the impact of cannon fire (in addition, trumpeters echoed each other from exit points at each side of the main stage) and the sprightly *Sanctus* found the combined London Voices and London Symphony Chorus on cracking good form. The soloists were splendid, too. Mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina excelled in her lower registers and tenor Frank Lopardo's soft singing was extraordinarily beautiful (especially in his "Ingenisco" solo). Soprano Michele Crider and bass René Pape gave strong, committed performances and the work's closing pages were tailored by one of the longest and most meaningful silences that I have ever witnessed in a concert hall. The programme booklet carried a photograph of Princess Diana in happy dialogue with Sir Georg, and it was appropriate that this penultimate Prom should honour their memories with a work that they both loved dearly.

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But, gazing down from his very own *Parnassus*, would Handel have at least been charmed by what he saw? Sun, sand, sky, sails, and palms – remnants of Cleopatra's Egypt as imported (courtesy of designer Joanna Parker) from some chic gallery in South Beach, Miami. Bright, hip colours, an emblematic cuteness. The look of Lindsay Posner's production is very much in keeping with the feel of it. Slight.

RC

In the smallest role of Clara, the housekeeper, Patricia Kane damn near steals the show in Gareth Armstrong's highly enjoyable revival of *Hay Fever* at the Salisbury Playhouse. Pert, disapproving servants are far from rare in Coward's plays. One thinks of Miss Hodge in *Design for Living* who waxes all prim and proper about the mistress's love affair with two bisexual men on the grounds that she herself has done things like her element in rural domesticity as a pirate would serving tea at the Admiralty. This production allows her to work off her frustration in an interpolated sequence that turns a scene change into a delightful dance routine. Preparing the breakfast table for the last act, she gets to tap and Charleston and clown around like some stagestruck wannabe Tessie O'Shea (though with rather more delicacy). It's like an inadvertently subservient parody of the shameless theatricalising of her employers.

It's the fact that she and her employers are as insultingly off-hand and unconventional as each other that gives Clara and the situation its comic edge in *Hay Fever*. Having been dressed to Judith Bliss, the retired actress vaguely planning a comeback, Clara has rather more in common with this bohemian family than she does with the strait-laced, separately invited guests who arrive at the Cookham country retreat on Saturday afternoon and speak again on Sunday morning after being subjected to an evening of humiliating games and historic attitudes.

A ton of formidable, poly-

pleasure Judith gets from the game of disconcerting innocent guests with displays of utterly trumped-up emotion. At one point poised between two bouts of arch role-play, she even cools off by blowing down the front of her glittering evening dress. There's a curious innocence to the gesture; it's rather like eavesdropping on a child during an unguarded interval in a let's-prettify fantasy.

Adams and her arty family (Frank Barrie, Lara Bobross and Matthew Carter) expertly communicate the fact that, for all their petty internal quibblings, the Blisses are united against the rest of the world in the strength of their serene self-absorption. Tucking into their cake at tea time, they positively glow with contentment, quite blind to the discomfort of their empty-handed, inhibited guests (Hannah Cresswell, Gulliford, Tim Meads and Adrian Sharp).

The cast are all very good and my one minor cavil with the direction is the decision to have the Blisses rush to the stage-like raised area with the piano when they shock the rest of the party by heading off, unannounced, into the last scene of *Love's Whirlwind*. Wouldn't the guests be more taken off guard if life and theatrics were less crisply separated? Otherwise, this is a production of *Hay Fever* that's not to be sneezed at.

Oasis launched their national tour in Exeter on Saturday. Though perhaps launch is too dynamic a word, writes **Magnus Mills**

**W**hen Liam Gallagher wanders round and round on the stage he looks completely lost, like the blokes at the back of the auditorium wandering round with pints of lager searching for their mates. And when he returns to the microphone his chosen

lager can produce. The other three (who should be given some collective name, such as "the stoneheads") don't do anything except concentrate on their instruments for the entire show, but that doesn't matter either. It's the Oasis sound that people have come for, and nobody seems bothered that there's nothing going on up on stage.

Good job, really. Apart from the deliberately wonky

stage-set, consisting of a

Rolls-Royce drum kit (registration number SYO 724F), a

giant backwards clock and a

lopsided phone box, there's

nothing much to see. Indeed,

the greatest cheer of the

evening came when the band

first emerged from the phone

box at the beginning of the

set. After that, the four

musicians remained firmly

rooted in place while Liam

drifted around and sang from

time to time.

It was tempting to question whether the enthusiastic Oasis crowd packing out this giant corrugated shed in Devon had ever seen any other bands to compare them with. The ones who were picked up after the gig by their parents in cars most probably hadn't. But wait, there were people here wearing T-shirts that proved they'd been to Reading, and even Glastonbury. They

can't all be wrong can they?

Or are they?

No, they can't. When you see Oasis perform "Roll With It", "Some Might Say", and "D'You Know What I Mean?" in a row, like a gambler laying down a royal flush, you get to know the meaning of the word great. That's actually the Gallagher brothers up there! The only difference between them and The Beatles is that they've played on *Top of the Pops*.

And don't forget that Noel Gallagher can sing as well (in his own way). He and Liam shared the vocals on "Acquiesce", the single encore song, and probably the rockiest composition in their entire set, as well as being their best-ever B-side. Noel also undertook several extempore forays on the lead guitar, notably a soaring eight minute solo at the end of "Champagne Supernova". Unfortunately, his association with lead guitar is more in the manner of Dave Hill or (listen closely) Justin Hayward, rather than, say, Jimmy Page or Rory Gallagher, so there were no guys down the front playing air. But it's obvious he could do a lot more with the instrument if he so chose. In fact, if it weren't for all the girls shouting the name of Liam, he could probably do it all on his own.

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## OPERA

### Giulio Cesare

Barbican, London

insubstantial, and, most potentially demeaning of all – ifey. Because you can play all you like with Handel's theatrical fancies, you can have fun with his wry appropriation of human frailty and folly, but you never, ever confuse irony with camp. And there is the rub. If irony is a pyramid-shaped ice lolly, then you're going to love this show.

Posner has ideas, or at least the beginnings of ideas, but they are at best sketchy. He has clocked, for instance, that Sextus and Ptolemy are both spoilt children at heart, the former, a mummy's boy who must ultimately prove that he is indeed the son of Pompey, and the latter a petulant, thumb-sucking wimp – Cleopatra's fraternal liability. Even so, it was at a premium here. The first encounter between Cesare and Tolomeo, where veiled threats are exchanged amid formal pleasantries, exhibited some semblance of it, thanks largely to Ann Murray's reading of that most insidiously memorable aria (with horn obbligato unhelpfully accident prone) "Va tacito e nascosto". I fancy it was her idea to share Ptolemy's opium pipe at precisely the point where her florid coloratura might best convey an unexpected but singularly satisfying "high". A bit of honest

mugging. Just as the celebrated Mount Parnassus pageant, Cleopatra's (and Handel's) elaborate entertainment for Caesar, was a bit of honest kitsch. Flown out over the largest of three pyramids conspicuously "borrowed" from just outside the Louvre in Paris (a cheeky contemporary allusion), Cleopatra is Virtue, her voluminous white skirts tumbling down to shroud her most precious inheritance, while a prism in her hand casts a rainbow across the sky. It's precisely that kind of largesse of gesture – an intellectual, spiritual, physical generosity – that I missed most from Posner's staging.

The singing more often than not did provide. Amanda Roocroft's Cleopatra wasn't helped one little bit by her image as a blonde Barbie doll in a shocking pink one-piece. No coquette ever dominated this opera, leave alone Egypt. Roocroft's problem is that the voice itself (flexible and perfectly well-managed) doesn't say a lot. It lacks allure, womanly allure. Perhaps it has matured too soon. She sings prettily and with feeling, but she's inclined to push hard to convey intensity, and the voice is having none of it. Ann Murray, with far

less voice now in practical terms, is the artist that Roocroft strives to be. She took a while to get into her stride, for the sinews to stiffen and the technique to kick in (fabulously determined heroic in Act 3), but by the time we arrived at the great *scena* "Dall' onore pengio" she was worlds her old magic again, refining the chromatics in such a way as to suggest that the Nile breezed themselves were bending the line,

It was perhaps a little unfair on two outstanding countertenors (but not us) that they should have found themselves in the same show. Brian Asawa was a voluptuous Ptolemy, but it was the Sextus of David Daniels (the most natural voice in this fact that I've ever encountered) who provided the evening's most fabulous singing. With Catherine Wu-Rogers (Cleopatra) dignified as ever in her suffering, mother and son heart-achingly accord at the close of Act 1.

Come the happy ending, artifices from Cleopatra's Egypt (yes, including her need to dress and look the part) are exchanged amid formal pleasantries, exhibited some semblance of it, thanks largely to Ann Murray's reading of that most insidiously memorable aria (with horn obbligato unhelpfully accident prone) "Va tacito e nascosto". I fancy it was her idea to share Ptolemy's opium pipe at precisely the point where her florid coloratura might best convey an unexpected but singularly satisfying "high". A bit of honest mugging. Just as the celebrated Mount Parnassus pageant, Cleopatra's (and Handel's) elaborate entertainment for Caesar, was a bit of honest kitsch. Flown out over the largest of three pyramids conspicuously "borrowed" from just outside the Louvre in Paris (a cheeky contemporary allusion), Cleopatra is Virtue, her voluminous white skirts tumbling down to shroud her most precious inheritance, while a prism in her hand casts a rainbow across the sky. It's precisely that kind of largesse of gesture – an intellectual, spiritual, physical generosity – that I missed most from Posner's staging.

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## THEATRE

### Hay Fever

Salisbury Playhouse

disgruntlement in a raffish trailing headband, Ms Kane's Clara stumps around, opening doors that slam straight back in people's faces and looking about as in her element in rural domesticity as a pirate would serving tea at the Admiralty. This production allows her to work off her frustration in an interpolated sequence that turns a scene change into a delightful dance routine. Preparing the breakfast table for the last act, she gets to tap and Charleston and clown around like some stagestruck wannabe Tessie O'Shea (though with rather more delicacy). It's like an inadvertently subservient parody of the shameless theatricalising of her employers.

It's the fact that she and her employers are as insultingly off-hand and unconventional as each other that gives Clara and the situation its comic edge in *Hay Fever*. Having been dressed to Judith Bliss, the retired actress vaguely planning a comeback, Clara has rather more in common with this bohemian family than she does with the strait-laced, separately invited guests who arrive at the Cookham country retreat on Saturday afternoon and speak again on Sunday morning after being subjected to an evening of humiliating games and historic attitudes.

A ton of formidable, poly-

pleasure Judith gets from the game of disconcerting innocent guests with displays of utterly trumped-up emotion. At one point poised between two bouts of arch role-play, she even cools off by blowing down the front of her glittering evening dress. There's a curious innocence to the gesture; it's rather like eavesdropping on a child during an unguarded interval in a let's-prettify fantasy.

Adams and her arty family (Frank Barrie, Lara Bobross and Matthew Carter) expertly communicate the fact that, for all their petty internal quibblings, the Blisses are united against the rest of the world in the strength of their serene self-absorption. Tucking into their cake at tea time, they positively glow with contentment, quite blind to the discomfort of their empty-handed, inhibited guests (Hannah Cresswell, Gulliford, Tim Meads and Adrian Sharp).

The cast are all very good and my one minor cavil with the direction is the decision to have the Blisses rush to the stage-like raised area with the piano when they shock the rest of the party by heading off, unannounced, into the last scene of *Love's Whirlwind*. Wouldn't the guests be more taken off guard if life and theatrics were less crisply separated? Otherwise, this is a production of *Hay Fever* that's not to be sneezed at.

Paul Taylor



In clover: Gareth Armstrong's "Hay Fever" Robert Workman

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## The Monday Interview



Deborah Ross  
talks to  
SHIRLEY BASSEY

# Sharp as a diamond, and a diva forever



No pain, no gain. A tragic past is a diva's best friend

Frank Spooner Pictures

**T**he great thing about Shirley Bassey is that when she gets up there in one of those spangled frocks with the slits that go right up the sides and opens that tremendous mouth of hers and goes "Goldfingeraaaaah!" or "Diamonds Are Foreveraaaaah!" she does it with such force it's as if her life depends on it. Which it pretty much does.

"Shirley, could you ever see yourselfacking it in?" "Never!", she cries. "I could wither away. It's what keeps me alive. It's what keeps me young." Shirley Bassey's now 60. And a granny, to boot. But somehow it doesn't matter that Shirley's 60 and a granny and still getting up there in those spangly, glamourous frocks with the slits up the side and, often, her necklines so low a good part of her bosom's hanging out. There is nothing

so vaguely grotesque or phoulish or aesthetic about it. It's a good bosom. It's Shirley. She loves doing it and we love to live her do it. She believes in it so we believe in it. She may, now I think about it, be one of the last of The Great Stars. Oh, do you think so?" she says, immensely pleased, and liking me a lot instantly, which takes something of a nice change. Today's so-called stars, they don't know how to do it, do they? They have one hit record and the world hails them as a star but they dress like tramps - like tramps! and they don't know how to relate to audiences or anything. Whereas you, I tell her, sing as if you really mean it. "I do! I do!" she cries excitedly. I am saying all the right things, obviously. I think she may even be a bit in love with me by now. We're at a hotel in London where she drives up in a chauffeur driven Daimler which doesn't have a "VIP" sticker in the window because it's a "VVIP" one. She's wearing, today, an Yves St Laurent jacket splashed with multi-coloured hearts and a Donny Osmond-style cap. Her fingers glitter with diamonds which don't so much cluster on her rings as gather into mountainous heaps. You would never find Shirley hanging up about glamour being a trifling, inconsequential thing. Shirley believes absolutely in things that sparkle and glitter. She can clearly remember her first husband, suicide. She says, now, "sometimes I hate love because it is so heartbreaking and destructive". Of course, it doesn't have to be, but you can see why it is with her.

She says she likes her men to be "real men". She went, last night, to see Mel Gibson in *Conspiracy Theory* but hated it - "I dozed off, to tell you the truth" - because Mel's character was very wet and you don't

go to the movies to see Mel being wet, do you? "You go to see him being whooaa!" she says. "I hate wet men. Hate men who dither. Hate wimples. Hate Butler. Now he's my kind of man." So you want to be carried off to the bedroom in a like-it-or not sort of way? "Yes! Yes!" But then, later, she says she can't stand men who want to make decisions on her behalf. I think as a woman, Shirley might be quite difficult to please.

Certainly, she is still very good-looking. And sexy, yes, although she isn't sexy in a feminine way. By this, I don't mean she's been a bad life. It may even have been a good life because it's been a star's life, and that's all she's ever wanted to be ever since one of her older sisters took her to a Billy Eckstein concert when she was very small and she saw that audience 'go apé' over him. Anyway, you don't get to be a true star - get to be a Judy Garland or an Elizabeth Taylor, say - unless, it seems to me, you suffer pain then get up there and do your stuff and show everyone how you can survive.

### 'Today's so-called stars, they don't know how to do it, do they? And they dress like tramps - like tramps!'

If you don't have the pain, then you're just the Nolan Sisters. Possibly, there was no way Shirley was ever not going to have a tragic life. But now. Is there some happiness now? Yes, she says, she thinks there may be. These days she lives alone in Monte Carlo and rather likes it. Previously, she's always had lovers or husbands or both on the go and it's quite nice, she says, being on her own for a change. "I have no one to worry about apart from myself. I can eat what I want, go where I want, do what I want." She has never had much luck on the man front. Everything's always ended in tears or, in the case of her first husband, suicide. She says, now, "sometimes I hate love because it is so heartbreaking and destructive". Of course, it doesn't have to be, but you can see why it is with her.

Shirley grew up in Tiger Bay, the docklands area of Cardiff before moving to Splot, an all-white area of Cardiff, when she was three and her mother remarried. I wonder, naturally, what it was like growing up as mixed race child in 1940s Britain, but she says if there was any racism, she never saw it. Possibly, she says, this is because everyone knew that if you called the Bassey children names "you'd get a punch in the nose." Tough as old boots, as I said. As the youngest of so many children,

Shirley never got a lot of time from anybody. She got under her mother's feet. Her older sisters were always scolding her for putting her dirty hands on their dresses or messing with their lipsticks. No, she never felt unwanted, but did feel "awkward and in the way".

Then, one evening, one of the sisters took Shirley to a Billy Eckstein concert at Cardiff's New Theatre. She doesn't know why this sister picked her out, but reckons "it must have been fate". She remembers not so much the concert, but going to the stage door afterwards with her sister and all the other autograph hunters and seeing Billy come out "and everyone going mad". As someone who had never been given much attention, this impressed her deeply. "I had never been interested in show business until that point. And then, a few days later, my brother came home with a Judy Garland record - *Somewhere Over The Rainbow*, I think - and that was

men's clubs in the evenings. She made her West End debut in a British revue called *Hot From Harlem* and had her first hit record with something very colonial called "The Banana Boat Song". She was a star by the time she was 20. And being a star was even better than working in the factory. And much better, as it turned out, than being married.

She's been married twice. First there was Kenneth Hume, a B-movie director who committed suicide after their divorce, and then there was Sergio Novak, an Italian producer. Both eventually became her managers, at her request, probably because she wanted to be controlled by them. But, of course, as the person bringing the money in, she was really the one in control. "I've always been the breadwinner and men don't like that. They turn on you. They bite the hand that feeds them. Eventually, too, they become very jealous of the love one has with an audience."

She's had three children, Sharon, Samantha and Mark. Sharon was born when Shirley was 17 and unmarried. She was raised by one of Shirley's sisters until she was seven. ("At 17, what could I have offered her?") Samantha threw herself from a bridge. Mark took drugs. She has castigated herself in print many times for being a bad mother. She was never there. Her children would weep to see her suitcase lined up in the hall yet again. Her work came before everything. In 1972, she gave an interview in which she described her life like this: "My work is a cycle of world tours. After our Christmas holidays in the Italian Alps skiing with the children, I will go to Australia for three weeks, then to Japan for two TV shows and two concerts. In March, I've a concert tour of America and in May I return for a tour of Britain..." Yes, of course she wishes she'd done things differently. But could she have? No, probably not. After Samantha died, she did try to retire. But a year later she was back. She couldn't kick it. She needs to perform. She needs audiences and applause. She loved her children, but probably not enough, because she's always loved being "a Star" first. This is sad in some ways, I guess, but, then again, it does make her Shirley Bassey, the woman who can still pack them in like no one else of her generation and who sings as if her life depends on it. Because it does.

Shirley's latest album, *The Birthday Concert*, is released today. A live recording of the concert she gave in July to celebrate her 60th birthday, it's out on Arifil Records and costs £12.99 for the CD and £8.99 for the cassette.

What to do with the cuddly toys? The girls undertook a census of them last week and discovered they had 73. Unfortunately they have given them all names, dates of birth and occupations so the conventional method of keeping numbers down - a midnight cull - is no longer possible. What was once an anonymous lime-green mutant rabbit languishing at the bottom of the dirty clothes basket is now a shop assistant called Sally whose birthday must be celebrated tomorrow. Plan B was to persuade the children to take some to Kensington Palace as a tribute to Diana, something several hundred other parents have obviously thought of before me - but I could not live with the thought that some poor East European tourist might be sent to prison for three years for succumbing to the plastic, one-eyed gaze of a win-a-prize-every-time teddy bear. On the other hand, maybe it's not such a bad idea to make adult possession of cuddly toys a criminal offence, particularly when combined with broderie anglaise heart-shaped cushions on the bed.

All those smug people who claim to only ever eat fish and white meat and regard your occasional longings for a juicy fillet steak as tantamount to feasting with the devil (or at least terribly unfashionable) will be murmuring "I told you so" over their grilled radicchio at the news of links between red meat and cancer. (Funny isn't it, though, how butchers always look so pale and ruddy while people who work in health shops are invariably pale and emaciated?) A rather more cheering piece of research emerged at the same time - apparently nearly half of all adult vegetarians are secret carnivores. What a cheek - you go to all that trouble of finding something tantalisingly meatless out of the *River Cafe* Cookbook to pander to your guests' purist taste buds and then you discover they go straight home and pig out on illicit hunks of flesh.

Good to see in the new women's magazine *Frank* that being hugely pregnant is fashionable again. Together with the news that having a baby over the age of 40 might increase my chances of becoming a lonely, wizened centenarian, the thought of lolling seductively around in fields, belly button protruding through a skimpy uterus-hugging Dolce & Gabbana is almost enough to make me try for number five. And this time, of course, I wouldn't insist on my husband being present at the birth (I will never forget the humiliation of him asking for a doggy bag as the placenta slipped out) as caring, sharing labour is now deeply uncool - "what, he moistened your lips with ice, oh God, how awfully 'Eighties'". My own primal instincts favoured giving birth behind a bush in Battersea Park, but I think women will lose out if men are banished to the waiting room: who else will tell all your friends how wonderful you were?

My book club meeting was a livelier affair than usual this month. It was the annual husbands' event, though inexplicably only four out of 12 turned up: we had given them Blake Morrison's *When Did You Last See Your Father?* to read, mistakenly thinking it would give them the opportunity to enquire about their own filial relationships. To be fair, though, we women neglected our topic, *The Persian Pickle Club*, in favour of discussing testicles and the news that large ones denote promiscuity, unfaithful bastards. Possibly feeling rather ringfenced, the men adopted studiously neutral expressions and careful reactions, like "Gosh, isn't that interesting?" All the wives, naturally, claimed not to be in a position to be able to compare sizes (this is East Sheen, after all). In fact only I was confident enough to defend my absent husband's magnificent undercarriage: always one to buck the trend he is, I'm sure, completely monogamous. (And if you have any evidence to the contrary, all letters will be received in strictest confidence.) In any case, what sort of man would allow his testicles to be taken between calipers, even in the interest of scientific research? The whole thing is obviously complete bollocks.

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ISSUE ONE  
OUT NOW

## the leader page

## Can Hague stop the rot of party dissent?

**L**ast year, Hugh Dykes was a "lifelong Tory", as he denied speculation that he was about to follow Alan Howard, Emma Nicholson and Peter Thurnham by defecting from the sinking ship. Today, his Tory life has ended and his Liberal Democrat one has begun. The Conservative Party will dismiss him as a known dissident and an ex-MP.

There is nothing so ex as an ex-MP, but Mr Dykes matters – possibly more than he can imagine. He matters partly because of the breathtaking irrelevance of the parliamentary Tory party, hidden in dusty corners of Westminster while Tony Blair's majority of 179 carries all before it. The importance of Tory politicians depends – for the moment – on what they have to say, rather than whether or not they sit on those green benches in SW1.

And Mr Dykes not only has important things to say, but says them on behalf of a large number of people who are still members of the Tory party. As he explains on the opposite page, he joined a Tory party that believed in constructive engagement with Europe. Now the party is in the grip of an "insulting, isolationist anti-Europeanism". He was an extreme, rebellious pro-European, but he was not a lone maverick. There are many who share his views on Europe at all levels of his former party, including its rump of MPs, and including former

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke.

What is interesting, however, is that Mr Dykes should have chosen to seek political asylum in Paddy Ashdown's party rather than in Mr Blair's. Whatever the disorienting effects of Blairism, and however much Mr Blair and Mr Dykes both talk of "One Nation", tribal feelings still run deep enough to keep them apart. Mr Dykes mentions only one policy which led him to prefer the Liberal Democrats to Labour: the pledge to raise taxes to pay for better schools and hospitals. Clearly, this makes sense to a local politician who fought bitterly against the closure of Edgware General Hospital. But it is striking that this is the only significant policy difference between the two parties.

So is the role of the Liberal Democrats now simply to act as a reception centre for defecting Tories who cannot quite bring themselves to go the whole hog? To pose the question is to begin to sketch out the wider significance of Mr Dykes's defection.

This week, the Liberal Democrats get their feet under, well, not the Cabinet table, but that of a Cabinet committee, and one chaired by the Prime Minister. This event will send further shocks through the post-earthquake landscape of British politics. It sends an important signal that Mr Blair is serious about the creative destruction of party political tribalism.

Nor is it a mere public relations sop: the committee will have real influence over vital questions for the future of British democracy. Most strikingly, the possibility of changing the electoral system for the House of Commons is wide open, with Mr Blair's own position evidently changeable.

This is not how most people thought of the "realignment of British politics" during the Tory years: everyone assumed that, if a proportional electoral system came, it would come as the price of Liberal Democrat support for a Labour government in a hung parliament. But Mr Blair has bigger

Tory organisation in this country finally levels out of its tailspin and Sir Archie Norman applies the management techniques of Asda supermarkets to turn it into a modern, membership-based national party, whatever is left will be much smaller, ideologically, financially and in terms of membership numbers, than the dominant political force it once was.

In other words, the field is clear for Mr Blair: he is poised to achieve an ascendancy over our national life for which there are few precedents. It is quite different from Margaret Thatcher's strident pre-eminence because it is based on co-opting threats rather than fighting them. Mr Blair is more like the Prime Minister of a Government of National Unity. Always somewhat detached from his own party, he now appears to hover above all parties, capable of drawing from the best of each of them, as well as calling upon the talents of business leaders, trade unionists and showbiz stars. This is not coalition politics, or consensus politics. The right phrase is "coalition politics", and Mr Ashdown seems to understand it well.

For some in Mr Blair's own party, it is all too much. But the real warning bells should be ringing in Conservative Central Office. This morning, Mr Hague and his spokespeople will condemn Mr Dykes as a petulant attention-seeker. They have to. It is

part of the rules of the game. But let us hope that, in private, they are giving serious thought to how broad or how narrow the Tory party is going to be. They are in danger of being corralled into an anti-European ghetto, cut off from the political mainstream. Monetary union is, as we report today, rolling onwards, and permanent abstention is not a sustainable policy. Mr Hague must recognise that a Conservative party that cannot attract its ranks people like Hugh Dykes will be marginalised for many, many years to come.

## Something fishy about feminism

Some men had high hopes of feminism, hoping that they might be excused compulsory attendance at the birth of their children on the grounds that what women want is to be surrounded by the sisterhood, instead of useless and squeamish New Men. A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle, as the famous separatist slogan of the Seventies had it. But, nearly all men now feel bound to go there and, what is more, 60 per cent of women are glad of their moral support. Not long now, then, before we take to the streets with placards demanding "More Underwater Cycle Lanes Now".



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Scottish lead for Wales to follow

**S**ir: The message of the Scottish referendum result to the people of Wales must be to look and learn from the experience of devolved government in other nations. We should learn from our successful European partners like Germany, where each *Land* enjoys considerable autonomy. We should consider successful devolved governments within the Commonwealth, such as the Australian model. Nor can anyone seriously claim that the American devolved system is a recipe for disunity and conflict.

Above all, let us consider Scotland. Five years from now, the Westminster parliament could again be dominated by right-wing dogmatists ready to inflict yet more damage on our social fabric. Scotland will have a permanent buffer against these attacks but, without an assembly, Wales will again be easy prey. We need to look at the self-confidence which other nations, both large and small, have demonstrated; then Wales must seize the moment and give a decisive "Yes" vote.

TIMOTHY HUW DAVIES  
Brighton, Sussex

**S**ir: Even an ardent Unionist such as Margaret Thatcher once said that no English politician could gainsay the democratic will of the people of Scotland.

While it is therefore necessary to grant Scotland the freedom it seeks even if it leads to full independence, one must also consider the democratic needs of the English. I therefore propose the following three changes to commence on the first day the Edinburgh parliament convenes.

First, Scotland should have its representation at Westminster cut from 72 to 45 in line with its population size. Second, the Scottish members should only be allowed to vote on UK issues, not on matters affecting England.

Third, the £1.4bn Scottish budget should be reduced by £2.5bn to bring it in line with expenditure in England. The Scots could then use their tax-varying powers to finance their own budget and no longer rely on the English taxpayer, via the Treasury, to support them.

PAUL HARRISON  
Welling, Kent

**S**ir: Reading about UK devolution while abroad can alter one's opinion. Seen from a German perspective, Tony Blair's "third way" (leading article, 13 September) between separation and the status quo appears to make perfect sense. Separation still makes no sense at all.

Like Scotland and Wales, Bavaria feels different from its neighbouring states. In spite of such differences, it is not separatist. It is content to remain absorbed into a federal system. Bavarians, like other Germans, do not wish to see their country fragmenting and reverting back to a collection of small independent states. They are aware of the price paid in unification and the advantages unity has brought. Furthermore, they realise size affects their influence and power, both internationally and within the European Union.

Scottish (and Welsh) separatists should learn from German pragmatism.

SELYN HODSON PRESSINGER  
Munich, Germany



## Struggling with basic skills

**S**ir: I am not surprised at the levels of illiteracy in over-45s ("One in five Britons fails literacy test", 12 September).

I left primary school in 1963. The school was in south London, with a mixed social intake, as it bordered working- and middle-class areas. Of the final year, approximately a quarter passed the 11+, and about a quarter were virtually illiterate.

There were two main reasons for the high proportion of children scarcely able to read and write. First, this was pre-Plowden, with a regimented system of teaching. Whole class rather than group work was the norm, although those who were expected to pass the 11+ were given extra coaching as a small group. Second, and I suspect much more important, none of my classes had fewer than 40 pupils. My elder sister went through primary school with classes sometimes in excess of 50. No wonder that with such large classes, many children who were struggling got totally lost.

In 1976, I met a teacher from my old school and as we talked she told me that for the first time she had succeeded in getting all her reception class children reading. When I asked her why that was, she simply said that for the first time the class size was below 20.

If the Government is serious in wanting to raise standards in basic skills, it could start by getting class sizes back to what they were in the 1970s.

RUTH SHARRATT  
Director  
Distance Learning Unit  
University of Sheffield

**S**ir: Literacy and numeracy are vocational skills and no school leaver should be without them. The current law obliges children to attend school (or receive an appropriate education) until the age of 16. If they were also required to pass GCSE English and maths before leaving then the problem would be solved.

The attitude in schools that relatively trivial subjects – the sciences, history, foreign languages – are entitled to a specific proportion of the pupil's time, rather than a share of the remainder after maths and English, must disappear. If it does, illiteracy and illiteracy will go with it.

EDMUND KEOHANE  
London SW12

**S**ir: I read with amusement the various theories propounded as to why a decline in standards of literacy has taken place. In fact, the explanation requires neither national surveys nor scholarly research. In almost every home in Britain is a television. It is switched on when the first member of the family gets up in the morning, and switched off by the last one to go to bed.

The business of watching television accounts for the vast majority of most children's leisure time; indeed, for many it is their sole recreation. This being so, it does not require an educationist to deduce that, because they devote so little time to reading, they will not become proficient readers.

A HARDING  
Stansted, Essex

**S**ir: If reading a bus timetable, filling in a form and following a recipe are indicators of literacy, then I know very many intelligent, well-educated people who could confidently claim to be illiterate.

R.J. HEWELL  
Bath

**S**ir: If reading a bus timetable, filling in a form and following a recipe are indicators of literacy, then I know very many intelligent, well-educated people who could confidently claim to be illiterate.

**S**ir: North Cyprus may be a "statelet" and a "little territory", but at least the Turkish Cypriots feel safe in this haven, away from the exuberance, turmoil and ethnic cleansing to which they have been periodically subjected by the Greeks.

HAKKI MUFTEZADE  
London Representative  
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus  
London WC1

**C**yprus under Greek domination, which they suffered for almost a century, are naturally repugnant to them.

North Cyprus may be a "statelet" and a "little territory", but at least the Turkish Cypriots feel safe in this haven, away from the exuberance, turmoil and ethnic cleansing to which they have been periodically subjected by the Greeks.

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# Why this was the moment to defect

by Hugh Dykes

I have been a member of the Conservative Party for 37 years, and served as Conservative MP for Harrow East for 27 years until this May. This week I have finally decided to leave the party, and to join Paddy Ashdown's Liberal Democrats. My decision is by no means a sudden impulse. It is the sad conclusion of a long period of soul-searching – the inevitable result of the Conservative Party's steady drift away from the principles and policies which I hold dear and which attracted me to the party all those years ago.

I have always been a "One Nation" Conservative, believing in social justice, committed to the European ideal, and a supporter of the sensible modernisation of our political system. On all these issues it is not so much a case of

The row with the local executive left a nasty taste in my mouth'

me leaving the Conservative Party, but of the party leaving me. It is good fortune for Britain that in the Liberal Democrats we have a party that has stood firm on what really matters to our future. I believe Paddy Ashdown is an extremely impressive leader, and I am proud to become the party's newest member today.

I have had growing concerns about the direction the Conservative Party has taken in recent years – doubts which I tried to stifle as the election approached. The row in January with my local executive – when its members blocked my attempt to participate with Labour and the Liberal Democrats in a review of constitutional issues – left a nasty taste in my mouth.

Inside, I felt uneasy about the rightward drift of social policy, about the growing divisions in our society and about the increasingly harsh tone of government pronouncements. I felt bitter about the closure of Edgware General Hospital, and about the impact of the loss of such front-line NHS services on the people I was in Parliament



The Gang of One: Tory MP Hugh Dykes early in his political career donned a Chairman Mao uniform to enter the House of Commons to hear the 1974 Budget

to serve. I felt that the Conservative Party ought to have been prepared to engage in a more rational debate about the modernisation of our constitution. I deplored at the party's drift into an insulting, isolationist anti-Europeanism that has only damaged Britain's interests and undermined our influence abroad. All these matters were important but, in so many ways, Europe was the deciding issue which obliged me to take this difficult decision.

The Conservative Party I joined was one that understood that Britain's place was at the heart of Europe, shaping Europe's future. The Conservatives in those days understood, in particular, that the best interests of British business lay in a positive and constructive pro-Europeanism. I rejoiced when Ted Heath's government joined the then European Economic Community in 1972.

The importance of Europe to the UK is as great today as it ever was. I want to be a member of a party which sees Britain's future firmly at the centre of Europe – a full partner in building a more integrated, more prosperous and more secure continent as we enter the next century. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party has given up that vision. It no longer speaks up for the interests of British business in the European debate.

The conduct of the Conservative election campaign filled me with gloom. I am not surprised that I and other MPs lost our seats, particularly when I recall the sorry progress of the cash-for-questions affair, and the chaos and confusion of our Europeanisation of the anti-Europeans came to dictate the party's policy.

Even after the disaster on 1 May, I thought it would be worth one last stand to save the party, to which I have dedicated my political life, from the inexorable drift to the right (when Central Office raised the issue, I considered trying to get the nomination for the Uxbridge by-election). But the final nail in the coffin of my hopes was Ken Clarke's defeat at the hands of William Hague. I realised then that the battle for the soul of the Conservative Party was lost, finally and conclusively.

Many of my erstwhile colleagues, sick at heart as I am, are still agonising. Others have decided to remain, however unhappily, in the party to which they have always belonged. I respect their decision, but after long thought I decided I had to act. I feel

what I have done represents the views of hundreds of thousands of former Tories.

After talking things through with Richard Holme, who masterminded the Lib-Dem election campaign, I met and talked to Paddy Ashdown direct, just before Parliament went into recess. In France over the summer we met again, and talked about the state of British politics, about the Conservative Party, about Europe. We discussed a wide range of policy issues, and agreed on much.

I have always been a liberal Conservative, valuing tolerance, decency and fairness. These "One Nation" values were once very strong in the Conservative Party. But I believe the party gradually lost touch with these traditional British values, on which its broad appeal had always been built. As we enter a new century, I believe there are a number of important reforms needed to our constitutional arrangements.

manifesto, I was struck by the way these values can run through the text and the policies – decency, a sense of fair play, and a basic tolerance. I was also impressed by the straight-forwardness of their message on the issue of tax – that if you want better schools and hospitals, you have to be prepared to pay for them. I saw not only a party I could respect but also a party I could feel at home in.

I was impressed, too, by the decision of the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties to sit down and talk about the implementation of constitutional reform, even before the election, and to invite me as a Tory MP to join in this exercise before the election, and I would have liked the Conservatives to have made a more positive contribution to the constitutional debate, as the party did back in the 1960s and 1970s. As we enter a new century, I believe there are a number of important reforms needed to our constitutional arrangements.

case as a matter of principle. They understand why greater sharing of power, at a European level, is actually in Britain's interest, and have been unswerving advocates of the positive case for Britain joining a single European currency. At their conference in Eastbourne next week, in debate in which I hope to be called to speak, they will set out a positive agenda for Europe after the Amsterdam summit, moving the debate forward instead of letting it stagnate.

At the end of our long discussions, Paddy invited me to join the party, and I accepted with pleasure. I don't feel I have left my home. I feel I have come home. The Conservative Party has changed, beyond recognition. British politics is changing, too. I am delighted that I am now with people whose views are closer to mine than the views of many I shared the Commons benches with in the last Parliament. It will be marvellous to be at the Liberal Democrat conference in Eastbourne next week, speaking up for what I believe, instead of apologising for what I abhor.

## The battle of incinerators vs recyclers



Polly Toynbee  
Is recycling a silly middle-class habit, giving us eco-feelgood for minimal personal sacrifice?

As it is, a small group of paper manufacturers, one single aluminium maker, and just two price-fixing glass makers drive down the prices, although they desperately want more material. In their greed to pay the lowest possible prices in the short term, they are throttling recycling schemes at birth, limiting the source

of materials they need in the long term.

Paper is the biggest potential money-spinner. We import 60 per cent of pulp for paper now, yet London alone throws away the equivalent growth of a forest in its own size every year. The pathetic 6 per cent of waste Britain currently recycles already saves £1bn a year in imports. Using recycled paper for newsprint is 35 per cent cheaper than using new wood pulp, so the manufacturers certainly want it. One key paper maker is considering setting up a vast new recycled paper mill, but is hesitating in the face of many councils' plans to incinerate instead of recycling. Cities are the new forests, but we are about to burn the paper trees instead of using them.

This is all a very odd business. Why doesn't the law of supply and demand operate here? Why is there no futures market in recycled materials? Because of the cartels which the Office of Fair Trading is investigating.

The cartels are aided by a weird system whereby the government demands that supermarkets provide certificates showing they have recycled 25 per cent of their packaging. Because they can't be bothered to hit these targets, all the supermarket chains buy certificates which state that the requisite amount of recycling has been done – by someone. These certificates are available from a single outfit consisting of all the recycling companies. This, oddly, is legal. And it means everyone has an interest in keeping the price of recycled material as low as possible.

Last year a new organisation called London Pride Waste Action Programme, put together by economist Professor Robin Murray, started up a pioneering pilot scheme to show how

cost effective recycling can be. But councils are still hesitant. In London only 1 million out of 2.8 million households get any recycling. The start-up costs are steep and a single contract with an incinerator seems easier to the lazy and unimaginative.

However, politically, recycling has turned out to be amazingly popular. People really like it. And it is not just a middle-class fad. One Hackney pilot in a down-trodden high-rise estate got a phenomenal 60 per cent participation from residents. It was a rubbish-strewn estate where chutes were permanently jammed so pounds of the stuff were tossed over balconies – clearing it away was costing £350 a ton. Recycling in such places pays even higher dividends in savings on cleaning-up bills.

The last government set a target of 25 per cent recycling by 2000, but did little to make it happen. However, if we reached that target, waste disposal bills would drop by 17 per cent, while creating large numbers of jobs in collection and paper and glass manufacturing.

But it needs the government to step in now and break this log jam. Gordon Brown needs to get the manufacturers round his famous breakfast table together with the local authorities. He needs them to agree fixed long-term prices, to persuade the authorities to invest heavily now in recycling. The OFT needs to break the manufacturers' cartels. More laws demanding the use of recycled paper would bring more manufacturers in to break the stranglehold of the present few. Otherwise, threatened with higher landfill taxes, local authorities will go ahead and rush for incineration. I, at least, have no further doubts about the value of recycling.

## A web of international like and dislike

Greg Rusedski was luckier than the people of Scotland. He was allowed to choose which nationality he adhered to without all the political parties shouting over his shoulder and telling him what to put down on the paper. Considering that the devolution vote was a matter of leaving it to the people to choose, you got the feeling that the parties were not in fact happy to leave it to the people at all but insisted on turning it into another party political thing.

Rusedski had an easier time of it, even though he had a harder choice. He had grown up in Canada of a Ukrainian father and English mother, so he must have felt part Canadian, part Ukrainian and part English.

This is a position I could not have begun to appreciate had I not met a Ukrainian Canadian earlier this summer. My wife and I were staying in Vermont at this small hotel called the Inn at Craftsbury Common, which not only cooked extraordinarily good food but had an extraordinary dining policy. *It made everyone sit at the same table and talk to each other.*

This meant that instead of doing what we usually do, which is to spend the whole meal wishing we knew who the people at the other tables were and what they were like, we spent the whole meal wishing the people at our elbow were at another table and that we didn't know quite so much about them ...

No, it's not true, actually. We met far more interesting and nice people than the other sort, and one of them was a charming young Canadian dentist who was called Len, which I suspect is a diminutive of his original Ukrainian name, because although he had no trace of any other accent but Canadian, he said that he spoke Ukrainian fluently. "I was born in Canada but I never spoke anything but Ukrainian and Russian in the home. My parents and I can all speak English, but it still feels very odd when I talk to them in English."

I asked him if he had ever been to the Ukraine. "Yes, I went for a trip after the fall of Communism. It was quite strange going abroad to a country where you spoke the language fluently. It was like having a secret power which I used straight away. A guy



Miles Kington

at the station thought I was American and offered me a taxi ride for \$10, in bad English. I told him in the best Ukrainian that he must be effing joking, and he was so surprised that I beat him down to 10 cents!"

At this point a French-Canadian at the other end of the table, who turned out to be an orthodontist from Montreal, cut into the conversation to talk about teeth, but I hauled him back from this after a while to get some advice on the speaking of French in Canada. Was it spoken with a Canadian accent? A French accent?

"Normally, neither," he said.

"There are so many different accents even in Canada. Look, you say something in French and I'll show you."

"Je veux voyager de

Montreal à Toronto," I said.

"Now, if you were a working man in Quebec, you'd pronounce that this way," he said, and demonstrated unintelligibly, and then went round half a dozen guttural accents, all of which sounded like incredibly provincial French. In fact, when I got to Montreal a few days later I found that many people had pretty good French accents as well, but the orthodontist, although French-Canadian, was not pro-French. "The French?"

You can keep them," he said. "They come over here to Canada and stay around as if they still owned the place and as if we were a bunch of colonials. God knows why they look down on us – we've had to come over the Atlantic in two world wars to rescue the French and have we ever heard a word of thanks from them? Never!"

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## obituaries / gazette



One of Greeves's fantastic ruined landscapes made with Victorian architecture

## Stig Anderson

In the music business, the pop entrepreneur is a much maligned creature, often seen either as a swengal pulling the strings or a financial wizard investing money on his charges' behalf. Then there are the true visionaries who actually see something in artists and help them realise their vision, even beyond their wildest dreams. The impresario Stig Anderson was the perfect embodiment of all these tendencies.

He was the driving force behind Abba, the Swedish/Scandinavian (one member, Björn, is Norwegian) pop group who dominated the charts through much of the Seventies. His business acumen and occasional lyrical contributions helped turn the 1974 Eurovision winners into a worldwide phenomenon and a record-breaking act, scoring nine No 1 singles, eight No 1 albums, and 18 consecutive Top Ten singles in the British charts.

Born in 1931 in Hova, a small town 200 miles south-west of Stockholm, Stig Anderson had once nurtured ambitions to be a pop star himself. After leaving school at 13, he went to night classes and became a primary school teacher. But, bitten by the rock 'n' roll bug, he also appeared as Stig Anderson & His Mashed Creampuffs. However, his real forte was lyric-writing, often in haphazard, simplistic English. He wrote his first song at 16 for a girl who had refused to dance with him and embarrassed her by performing it in public.

Of the 2,000 songs he claims to have penned, the most memorable are the hilarious "The Girls Who Know Are Found In The Country and Rockin' Billy", a 1960 hit for Lill-Babs in Scan-

davia and Holland. He used his royalties wisely to finish his schooling and graduated from the National Training College of Teachers in Stockholm.

Having had his first taste of international success, Anderson set up the pompously named Sweden Music company to publish his songs. Three years later, he joined forces with Bengt Bernhag, an imaginative promotion man and studio engineer, to form Polar Music. They discovered the West Bay Singers, featuring one Björn Ulvaeus at a Swedish Radio competition. Wanting to cash in on the popularity of skiffle and folk music, they renamed the band the Hootenanny Singers and had them cut a Swedish version of Tom Jones's "Green Green Grass Of Home".

By 1966, Ulvaeus was keen to strike on his own. He met Benny Anderson who played keyboards with the Hep Stars, then almost as famous in their homeland as the Beatles. When both their groups floundered in 1969, Stig asked the duo to write songs for his other acts and also their own album. Together, the three composed the jolly "Lycka" ("Happiness") and, on the subsequent long-player of the same name, included a track called "Hej Game Man" ("Hey, Old Man"). This was the first time Benny Anderson, Anni-Frid Lyngstad (known as Frida), Björn Ulvaeus and Agnetha Faltskog appeared together on record. By then, they'd become two couples but still pursued separate musical careers.

Following the suicide of his partner Bernhag after years of health problems, Anderson wanted Ulvaeus to join him in the Polar organisation but Ulvaeus held out for his friend

Benny Anderson to become a partner too.

Anderson was determined to come up with a winning entry for the Eurovision Song Contest. In 1972, "Better To Have Loved", the writers' first attempt, for the Swedish singer Lena Anderson, came third. The following year, having had a couple of hits with "People Need Love" and "He Is Your Brother", Björn, Benny, Agnetha & Anni-Frid thought they were on to a winner with "King Ring" but they lost. Competitors flooded in and it was decided that in 1974, the Swedish entry would be decided by a phone-in.

On Anderson's advice, the quartet shortened their name to Abba, using the initials of their first names (they also had to ask the permission of the largest fish-canning factory in Sweden which shared the same name).

They couldn't decide whether to enter "Hasta Manana" or "Waterloo" but plumped for the latter because, according to Ulvaeus, "it was more fun to perform". Once again, it was Stig Anderson who had set things in motion and suggested out of every juke-box.

Abba got bigger, pioneered pop videos, launched a thousand parodies, toured the world. *Abba The Movie*, released in 1978, even showed Anderson playing himself (he also co-produced the film with Reg Grundy, the Australian who later launched *Neighbours*). He was enjoying every minute, cutting deals and looking after what had become the second most profitable corporation in Sweden, with average profits of £3 million a year in the late Seventies – not far behind Volvo.

After the film, Anderson had less time to contribute lyrics but remained a soundboard for Ulvaeus and Anderson who assumed full creative control on later classics like "Angel Eyes", "I Have A Dream", "The Winner Takes It All", "Super Trouper" and "One Of Us". By then, they were documenting the break-up of both their relationships in songs.

Ninety-eight-one saw the group pay respect to their mentor on his fiftieth birthday with a limited edition 12in single pressed on red vinyl (200 copies) entitled "Salute To Stig". But behind the scenes, matters were coming to a head. Anderson had set up various companies to help reduce Abba's tax burden. The four members had always refused to become tax-exiles and were paying Sweden's highest rate – 85 per cent. Anderson was also selling Abba

records behind the Iron Curtain. Payment was often in kind, and soon, through Pol Oil, he was dealing in oil as well as records. Following a sudden drop in the average price of a barrel, the whole house of cards collapsed and an investigation into Abba's affairs was launched.

Apart from Frida who had sold all her shares in 1982, the rest of the band very nearly went to jail and had to settle out of court with their Inland Revenue. Anderson became persona non grata with his former protégés who, justifiably, held him responsible for the whole fiasco and sued him for unpaid royalties. It was a messy end to

one of the greatest music busi-

## T. A. Greeves

ness partnerships of all time. However, by the late Eighties, the nostalgia cycle had spun so fast that everybody from Elvis Costello to U2 via Erasure and the Lemonheads was performing Abba songs. The Australian "tribute" band Björn Again were also doing fine business on the college and cabaret circuit. To maximise income for Polar Music, Stig Anderson had always set up separate deals with various record companies in different countries (including a surprising early deal with Hugh Hefner's Playboy records in the US). In late 1989, he decided to cash in his chips and sell off the whole company to Polygram for an

undisclosed amount. The way

was thus cleared for a host of lucrative compilations (*Abba Gold*, 1992, has to date sold over 11 million copies), a lavish box-set (*Thank You For The Music*, 1994) and the reissue of the whole catalogue.

In 1989 Anderson set up the Polar Music Prize, given through the Royal Swedish Academy of Music to one pop and one classical musician every year. Dizzy Gillespie, Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen have thus been honoured alongside the Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski and the choir director Eric Ericson.

In recent years, the kindly, avuncular Tom Anderson be-



Greeves: avuncular

came the Grand Old Man of Bedford Park, never tiring of explaining its virtues while holding court in Norman Shaw's "lair". That the Victorian Society now has its headquarters in Bedford Park is, in its way, a tribute to him.

Greeves was also a sensitive pianist, having a special interest from his late schooldays onwards in early keyboard instruments, and served as a committee member of the Galpin Society for many years. Another love was 17th- and 18th-century verse, especially Milton and Pope, pages of which he had committed to memory. He used to say that this might one day stand him in good stead for a rainy day, which it certainly did in his last illness.

Until comparatively recently, Greeves's drawings were known only to friends and stalwarts of the "Vic Soc", but two exhibitions of his work were organised by Robin Garton – in 1978 and 1987 – and in 1994 Andrew Best organised a splendid celebration in the beautiful limited-edition book illustrating his work, appropriately entitled *Ruined Cities of the Imagination*.

Tom Greeves's imagination was truly original and his fantastical drawings are a significant part of the curious story of the rediscovery of Victorian architecture.

Gavin Stamp

*Thomas Affleck Greeves, architect and illustrator: born London 4 June 1917; married 1950 Eleanor Price; died London 31 August 1997.*



The driving force behind Abba: Anderson, third from left, with (from left) Björn Ulvaeus, Agnetha Faltskog, Frida Lyngstad, Benny Anderson and their conductor Sven-Olof Waldoff, after Abba had won the Eurovision Song Contest with 'Waterloo' in 1974

Stones Sixties impresario Andrew Oldham collaborated with Anderson on *Abba, The Name of the Game*, a book which documents some of the goings-on behind one of pop's major success stories. In 1976, when asked the secret of his and Abba's success, Stig Anderson gave a simple reply: "Always work very hard. Do your best. Don't forget anything. And don't take life too seriously."

Pierre Perrone

*Stig (Abba) Anderson, lyric writer, music publisher and manager: born Hova, Sweden 25 January 1931; married (two sons, one daughter); died 12 September 1997.*

## Professor John Knowelden

In 1960 John Knowelden was appointed to the Chair of Preventive Medicine and Public Health (later Community Medicine) in Sheffield University, a position he held for over 20 years. He was joint editor of the *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine* from 1959 until 1969 and for a further three-year stint from 1973; and was co-author (with Ian Taylor) of the standard textbook *Principles of Epidemiology* (1964).

It was at Sheffield that he made major contributions in training in public health medicine, not only in the university but nationally, for in 1977 he was appointed Academic Registrar of the Faculty of Community Medicine. In this post he was responsible for the development of training and examinations for the young faculty, enabling those wishing to make public health a career to achieve the high stan-

dards required for the speciality. He held this post until his retirement in 1984.

Knowelden was educated at Colfe's Grammar School in Lewisham, obtaining his medical training at St George's Hospital Medical School and qualifying in 1942. Called up to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve the same year, he served as a Surgeon Lieutenant in a Q-Class destroyer. His naval experience was later of great value when in 1977 he was appointed Civil Consultant in Community Medicine to the Royal Navy.

On demobilisation, he attended the Diploma in Public Health (DPH) course at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It was reported that he had achieved the highest ever mark in the intelligence test to which all DPH students at that time were sub-

jected. He was then awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship in Preventive Medicine, enabling him to study in the United States, at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, in Baltimore.

On returning to Britain, in 1949 he was appointed lecturer in the Department of Medical Statistics and Epidemiology and a member of the Medical Research Council's Statistical Research Unit at Bradford Hill. This relationship developed into a lifelong friendship and encouraged Knowelden to develop into one of the steadiest and most productive epidemiologists of his day.

As with his teaching, so it was with his research work; meticulous, careful, modest, but producing work widely recognised as of great importance. Much of his early work was concerned with the measurement of the efficacy of vaccination against whooping cough, of the efficacy of treatment of rheumatic fever, then of greater importance than it is today, and of the use of antibiotics in the treatment of pneumonia and other respiratory conditions.

A particularly important study, carried out in collaboration with Bradford Hill, showed a definite relationship between tonsillectomy and the later, often much later, onset of poliomyelitis. At about the time Knowelden also took a major part in the organisation of the trial of poliomyelitis vaccine.

This involved the organisation of records on nearly two million children from all areas of Great Britain. He also developed an interest in the statistics of cancer and was instrumental in setting up cancer registries in Uganda and Jamaica.

In 1966, during his time at Sheffield, he established one of the first Medical Care Research Units funded by the Department of Health to investigate aspects of cost-effectiveness of service (rather than strictly clinical) aspects of innovation. His first study in this field was an investi-

gation of the effectiveness and acceptability of early discharge after hernia repair. Another important study undertaken in Sheffield was a large study of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), which established the syndrome's various underlying factors more clearly.

He also played a major role as member or secretary of many Medical Research Council and Health Department committees, underlining his abilities as an organiser of great skill with enormous ability to elicit co-operation from the often numerous bodies and individuals involved in data collection.

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his death, and in great pain, he visited my family in Scotland. Having a pre-dinner drink we felt that "good health" was an inappropriate toast. Without hesitation, Knowelden suggested "survival".

M. A. Headen

*John Knowelden, epidemiologist: born London 15 April 1919; Lecturer in Medical Statistics and Member, Medical Research Council Statistical Research Unit 1949-66; Editor, British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine 1959-69, 1973-76; Professor of Community Medicine (formerly of Preventive Medicine and Public Health), Sheffield University 1960-84; Academic Registrar, Faculty of Community Medicine 1977-85; Civil Consultant in Community Medicine to the Royal Navy 1977-84; CBE 1983; married 1946 Mary Sweet (two sons); died Scarborough 23 July 1997.*

He was then awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship in Preventive Medicine, enabling him to study in the United States, at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, in Baltimore.

On returning to Britain, in 1949 he was appointed lecturer in the Department of Medical Statistics and Epidemiology and a member of the Medical Research Council's Statistical Research Unit at Bradford Hill.

This relationship developed into a lifelong friendship and encouraged Knowelden to develop into one of the steadiest and most productive epidemiologists of his day.

As with his teaching, so it was with his research work; meticulous, careful, modest, but producing work widely recognised as of great importance. Much of his early work was concerned with the measurement of the efficacy of vaccination against whooping cough, of the efficacy of treatment of rheumatic fever, then of greater importance than it is today, and of the use of antibiotics in the treatment of pneumonia and other respiratory conditions.

A particularly important study, carried out in collaboration with Bradford Hill, showed a definite relationship between tonsillectomy and the later, often much later, onset of poliomyelitis. At about the time Knowelden also took a major part in the organisation of the trial of poliomyelitis vaccine.

This involved the organisation of records on nearly two million children from all areas of Great Britain. He also developed an interest in the statistics of cancer and was instrumental in setting up cancer registries in Uganda and Jamaica.

In 1966, during his time at Sheffield, he established one of the first Medical Care Research Units funded by the Department of Health to investigate aspects of cost-effectiveness of service (rather than strictly clinical) aspects of innovation. His first study in this field was an investi-

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**ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS**  
The Duke and Duchess of York's first visit to the Royal Hospital in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, on 12th September 1997.

**Lectures**  
National Gallery: Paola Tinagli: "Women in Italian Renaissance Art" (cassette and spalliera panel), 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Caroline Sargison: "Boule and Lacquer Furniture", 2.30pm.

**Changing of the Guard**  
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guards at 11am.

## BG might turn on the tap to give something back to shareholders

Well, will BG, the old British Gas, join the fashionable stock market movement and return value to shareholders?

Speculation that it will indulge in buying in its shares or even think in terms of a special dividend has produced a dramatic share display, with the price touching 273.5p recently against 119.5p last year.

As British Gas it became something of a comedy of errors with such diversions as the take-or-pay gas contracts, the unfortunate uproar over Cedric Brown and overzealous cost-cutting which led to an alarming fall in customer service standards. Its rumbustious relationship with its industry regulator was another source of fascination.

Early this year British Gas, in one swoop, put past misdemeanours behind it, as far as the market was concerned, by climbing on the demerger bandwagon. It split into Centrica, the gas supply arm, and

BG, looking after gas transportation and international oil and gas exploration.

After initial uncertainty the gas implosion captivated the market and shares of Centrica, as well as BG, gathered strength.

Last week Centrica, which inherited the notorious take-or-pay contracts, suggested the problem would be manageable by the end of the year.

BG, on Wednesday, should mark its maiden profit announcement with underlying interim figures of around £482m. But the windfall tax of £14m and around £100m of restructuring costs will leave it in the red.

Still an annual dividend of 8p a share is likely to be signalled with, say, a 3.2p interim. And then there is the possibility of turning on the tap to give back value to shareholders.

Such a scheme, after so much poverty pleading, would seem to be exceedingly cheeky,

even brazen. But Simon Flowers at NatWest Securities is one who thinks it is a distinct possibility. The idea is BG would take on extra debt, say up to £3bn. Gearing would jump to some 150 per cent, but that would not be exceptional for a utility with long-life assets.

On such calculations up to £2bn could be available for distribution; a bonus the Sids who have stuck with the company through thick and thin since the 1986 privatisation would no doubt like to see in the shape of special dividends rather than the company merely buying in shares from institutions.

BG's first interims occur in another week heavily laden with results. Last week's deluge, although largely encouraging, failed to inspire the market with Footsie faltering 146 points to 4,948.2. It is doubtful if this week's figures will have much impact, with New York and Far Eastern markets likely to dominate sentiment.

Early this year British Gas, in one swoop, put past misdemeanours behind it, as far as the market was concerned, by climbing on the demerger bandwagon. It split into Centrica, the gas supply arm, and

Tesco, which seems to be challenging for the bidder-for-all-seasons mantle, has had results tomorrow, with a 9 per cent gain to around £350m

looking likely. In the past few months the supermarket chain, which has always been acquisition, has been linked with struggling WH Smith and Save, the petrol retailer which used to be called Frost Group.

A case can be made for both acquisitions. Tesco could roll out its Metro concept much more quickly if it could cherry pick among Smith's retail spread and Save would give it even more muscle in the petrol market place.

But it already has a lot on its plate, which is holding back profits. Its Irish supermarket excursion will weigh on the interim figures through higher interest charges and integration costs, and the French Cateau

chain is finding the going tough.

Then there is its central and eastern Europe ambitions. Start-up and increased administration costs and sterling's strength will take their toll; there is not much likelihood of profits percolating through to some time from its venture behind the old iron curtain.

Further overseas expansion is expected, with Tesco thought to be looking at Hong Kong and other Asian markets.

Two other blue chip retailers, Kingfisher and Next, are on Wednesday's reporting schedule. Both should have scored from the building society conversions although the market will be anxious to hear more about the recent retail slow-down which has become apparent.

With the B&Q do-it-yourself chain making further headway and the Comet electrical retailing spread back in profit, Kingfisher should continue

to push away from the dark days of 1995.

With only Darty, its French operation, expected to disappoint, interim figures should be up 22 per cent to £135m.

Kingfisher's shares in 1995 touched 389p; they closed last week at 759.5p. Next, in 1990, traded down to single figures although the recorded closing low is 13.5p. On Friday they were 731.5p.

Insurer Sun Life and

Provincial is unlikely to celebrate its Footsie inclusion with interim higher profits on Thursday. The market is looking for around 590m compared with 592.5m.

Other Footsie constituents reporting are Mays, the business support group which is in line for finals of £153.5m

(£132m), and RMC, the building materials supplier, thought to be on target for £110m against £95.8m at its half-way stage.

Another Footsie member, the P&O property and shipping group, is expected to accompany its interim figures with details of the return to market of its Bovis house-building business. Such a move would be good for sentiment although the ongoing Monopolies and Mergers Commission probe into its proposed merger with Stena Line continues to cast a shadow. Profits are likely to be a shade lower at £130m.

Others with figures include Dalgety, the struggling pet food group where year's profits could be down from £101.9m to £61m. Disposals could help cushion the fall. Interims are also due from international trader Inchcape (£74m against £82.8m) and Mirror Group (£43.5m against £39m).

### STOCK MARKET WEEK

#### DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

#### Share spotlight

share price, pence

800

700

600

500

400

300

200

100

0

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# business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL  
OF THE YEAR

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Virgin acts to stem complaints

**Michael Harrison**

Virgin Trains is to take on extra staff to improve customer service after being deluged with 7,000 complaints and criticised by the rail regulator since it took over the InterCity West Coast and Cross Country passenger franchises earlier this year.

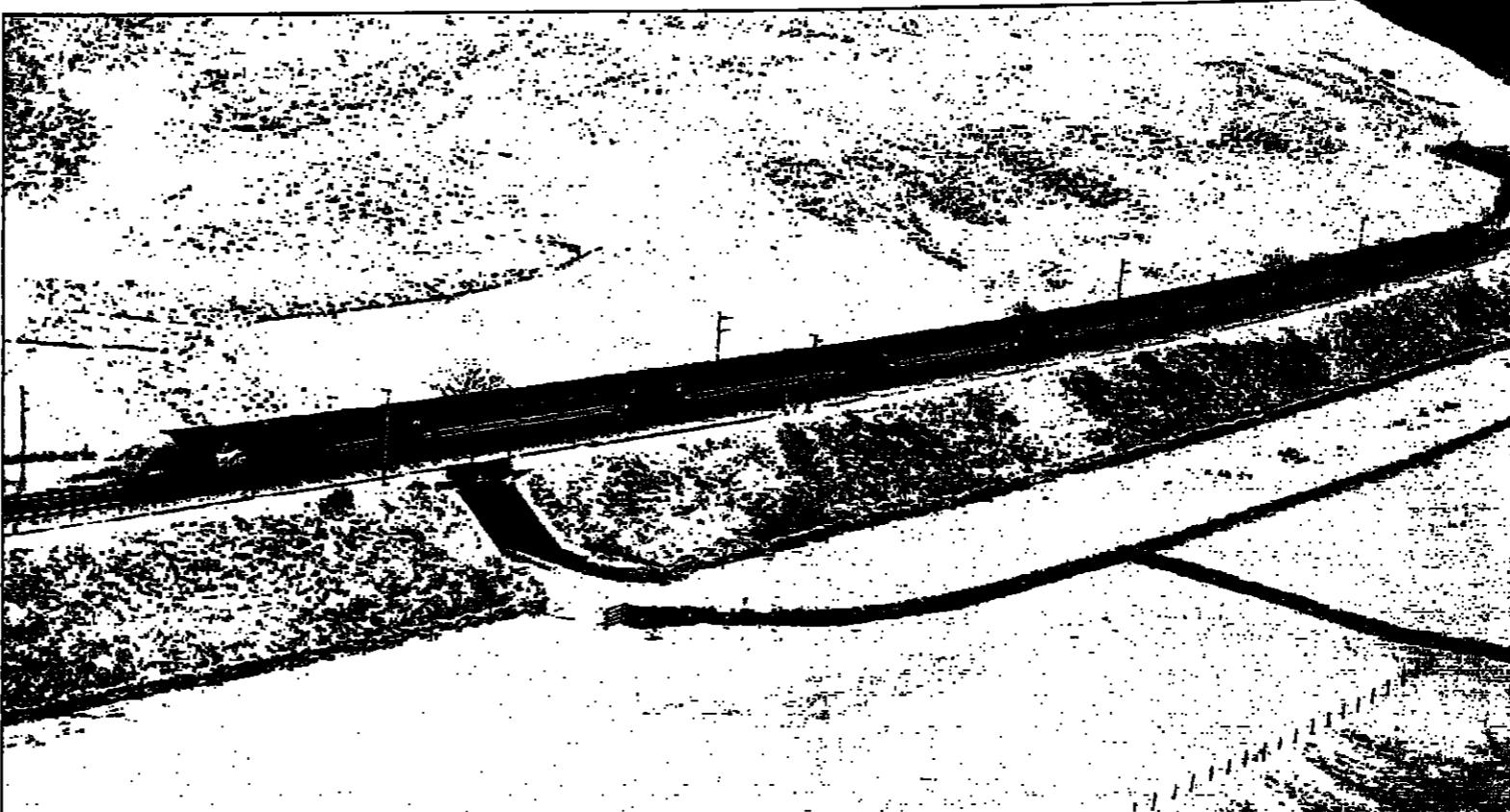
The company also plans to spend £100m this winter revamping its fleet of 100 trains following a large number of complaints about the air conditioning, toilets and buffet facilities on board its InterCity trains.

The volume of complaints has been such that passengers have been unable to get through to Virgin Trains customer services centre in Birmingham. Telephone lines are jammed on some days and on others calls go unanswered.

From next weekend Virgin's booking service and customer complaints department will be run centrally with customers nationally able to telephone an 0345 number in Edinburgh. An extra 30 staff are being taken on to supplement the 270 sales staff already in Edinburgh and 22 staff in Birmingham dealing with customer complaints.

Virgin took over Cross Country services in January and InterCity West Coast in March. Since then it has run into punctuality problems on the North-West and Scottish sectors of the West Coast line which could trigger compensation payments for season ticket holders.

A spokesman for the Office



Virgin Trains' West Coast franchise has been plagued by punctuality problems and complaints about standards of service. Photograph: Lesley Donald

of Passenger Rail Franchising said: "We are disappointed with the performance of Virgin's West Coast service." However, he added that the penalties it could impose on Virgin were limited because it was not subject to the same kind of performance regime as the commuter rail franchises.

"We judge that the amount of competition Virgin faces from road, rail and, in some cases, air should be enough incentive for them to improve their performance," he said.

The charter standard published by the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising sets Virgin a target of running 90 per cent of services on time or within 10 minutes. If that figure drops to below 87 per cent then passengers are entitled to discounts.

Up to the middle of June, punctuality on parts of the West Coast line was only reaching 78 per cent to 81.5 per cent.

The £100m revamp will include new toilets, new seating and baby-changing areas on some trains, refurbishment of buffet areas and new uniforms for staff. Virgin also plans to spend £5m to improve air conditioning on its West Coast trains.

A spokesman conceded that it had received a large number of complaints but said this compared with 12,000 over the same period last year when the two franchises were still under British Rail's control.

"The reason we have had a lot of complaints is that people's expectations are very high," he said. "But they must be patient. We inherited a mess. The West Coast was the worst part of the BR network. There were 250 vacancies in catering, some of the stock had not been repaired for 10 years and uniforms were threadbare. We are

proud of the improvements we have achieved so far."

He said that 60 per cent of the complaints it had received over the summer related to air conditioning which was designed so that it only operated at temperatures of more than

29 degrees celsius. The punctuality problems had been caused mainly by the collapse of a bridge over the West Coast line at Nuneaton which had forced Railtrack to impose a 5mph speed restriction.

The Government subsidy this year is £77m but from 2001 Virgin starts to pay an annual fee for the franchise rising from

£3.9m to £220.3m. The Cross Country franchise also runs for 15 years and will result in a payment of £576m in subsidies to Virgin.

However Virgin has to replace the entire fleet of Cross Country trains by 2002.

Dubious gas sales tactics face curbs

**Chris Godsmark**  
Business Correspondent

The gas watchdog, Ofgas, is to publish plans for legally enforceable curbs on dubious doorstep sales tactics in the next few days after attempts to agree a voluntary code of practice failed.

Ofgas from the weekend were understood to be finalising the plans over the weekend, which would include a new condition in gas companies' operating licences obliging them to abide by strict marketing guidelines. The draft code includes a seven-day cooling-off period for customers who sign contracts and a requirement that suppliers do not make outlandish claims.

In trials of domestic gas competition in the south of England, some independent suppliers have been reprimanded by Ofgas for allegedly telling customers that British Gas had either gone out of business or "run out of gas".

The statutory code has emerged after months of haggling in which Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, put her faith in voluntary guidelines policed by the industry. As early as January the Office of Fair Trading convened an industry conference to find a solution.

As complaints about dubious sales tactics mounted, Ms Spottiswoode faced pressure from the new Government.

Sue Slipman, director of the Gas Consumers Council, hailed the legally enforceable code as a breakthrough. "We've argued for this all along. The regulator had hoped the market could police itself and we're now pleased she has recognised that it won't."

However, the proposals would need the support of 90 per cent of suppliers to come into force, casting doubt on the chances of an agreement.

The industry is already split over a recently created voluntary body, the Association of Energy Suppliers (AES). Two of the biggest independent gas companies, Calorite and Eastern, have refused to join the AES, arguing it did not fully reflect the concerns of new entrants into the market.

Neil Lambert, joint general manager of Calorite, said he would need to study the Ofgas consultation document closely before agreeing to the new code.

Let's

## Guinness may hive off spirit brands

**Chris Godsmark**  
and Andrew Yates

Guinness and Grand Metropolitan look set to hive off some of their best-known spirits brands in the latest attempt to clear their proposed £23bn merger with the European Commission.

The two drinks giants are understood to be preparing to offer concessions to the EC's merger task force in a bid to clear the final regulatory hurdles. Karel van Miert, the EC competition commissioner, is thought to have serious concerns about the power the combined group would have over the European spirits market and its ability to dictate terms to drinks retailers.

The merged company, to be

called GMG Brands, would have more than 40 per cent of the Scotch whisky market in several European countries. GrandMet and Guinness are already the world's first and second largest spirits suppliers, with brands such as Bell's whisky, Gordon's gin and Smirnoff vodka. A final decision by the EC is due on 27 October.

Earlier this month the companies put forward a vigorous defence of their plans at two days of private hearings in Brussels after receiving a formal letter of objections from the EC.

In this first phase of the negotiations the drinks groups have stopped short of offering any significant alterations to the deal. But sources close to the dis-

cussions said Guinness and GrandMet were preparing to shift their approach in the next few weeks and offer concessions which they hope will satisfy the EC. "From now on it's for GMG to come up with concessions, rather than the merger task force," said the source.

Another industry source said: "GrandMet and Guinness know they may have to make concessions. They are drawing up plans to dispose of some of their brands if that is what it takes to get the merger through."

Some analysts believe that GMG Brands will have to give up at least one of its whisky brands in certain markets such as Spain, Germany and the Belgian companies.

GMG could also have to give up brands in North America to such as Dewar's, White Horse and VAT 69 could be sold, which would still leave the company with leading names such as Johnnie Walker and Bell's.

The EC is also concerned about the dominance the group will have over the European white spirits market and it may be required to sell off leading gin brands such as Bombay.

Drinks rivals Allied Domecq, Irish Distillers and Seagram are believed to have submitted their formal objections to the EC, with fears that the merger will give Guinness and GrandMet a virtual monopoly in certain markets such as Spain, Germany and the Belgian companies.

GMG could also have to give up brands in North America to

clear the deal with the US Federal Trade Commission. Seagram, the Canadian drinks giant, claimed the deal would give GMG Brands a 75 per cent share of the US Scotch whisky market. Analysts believe GMG Brands is preparing to dispose of some of its smaller brands such as Scoresby, Crawford and Ushers, which together account for 15 per cent of its US Scotch sales.

Even if the EC and FTC are prepared to accept concessions, the company will have to overcome the challenge of Bernard Arnault, head of French luxury goods group LVMH, who is trying to snipper the merger.

A Guinness spokesman said talks with the EC were confidential.

## IN BRIEF

• Pop stars' earnings are set to more than double over the next five years, according to a survey of entertainment agents conducted by Credit Suisse. The UK music industry is expected to show huge growth, driven by strong sales of records overseas. Michael Jackson was voted by agents as the most successful pop star ever, according to the survey. He beat Oasis into second place, but the Manchester pop sensation came ahead of U2 and the Spice Girls. However aspiring stars cannot count on cashing in on the industry's growth. Agents said the majority of new bands failed within 12 months and image was much more important than talent.

• Economic growth in the UK is set to almost halve over the next year as rising interest rates hit consumer spending, the Chartered Institute of Marketing forecasts today. Professor Douglas McWilliams, the institute's economic adviser, predicted that total output growth would fall from 3.7 per cent this year to 2.1 per cent next year and would edge up only slightly to 2.3 per cent in 1999. Inflation will also drop back to 2.7 per cent in 1998.

• Worldwide demand for energy could double by 2020, needing investment of \$3 trillion to cope with demand, according to a report by PowerGen, the privatised generator. It says the huge rise in demand will influence the structure of the industry, with emerging economies funding the investment through privatisation programmes. PowerGen says the industry is likely to rationalise into large global companies or smaller independent power producers.

• Marks & Spencer is planning to bring its Brooks Brothers clothing chain into Britain and Europe. There are 112 Brooks Brothers outlets in America and 62 in Japan. The chain, bought by M&S in 1988 for £400m, mainly sells classic menswear, although recently it has introduced casualwear ranges.

## Daejan to fend off board attack

**Nigel Cope**  
City Correspondent

Daejan Holdings, the property group controlled by the Freshwater family, is prepared to face down criticism over its failure to comply with corporate governance guidelines at its annual meeting later this week.

Corporate governance specialists have criticised the company's board structure, saying it fails to meet key recommendations laid down by the Hampel committee's findings on corporate governance as well as the age or length of service of non-executive directors.

In the section on corporate governance in the company's annual report, Daejan says it was a risk of them becoming less

efficient and objective if they remained on the board for an excessive length of time. The reappointment of Mr Davis is necessary to split the roles of chairman and chief executive.

Daejan's company secretary, Chris Morse, said the board had looked at the corporate governance issue but decided to make no changes. "The board has its own views on how to manage its business and the Hampel report seemed to be making back in that direction."

In the section on corporate governance in the company's annual report, Daejan says it

does not think additional non-executive directors would benefit shareholders or that it was necessary to split the roles of chairman and chief executive. "Changes should be made when they are appropriate and in the best interests of the company, rather than for the sake of change itself."

Daejan shares have risen from £12.65 to £15.30 in the past year. However, over the past five years the shares have underperformed the market by 7 per cent. Daejan owns a mixture of property and is capitalised at £274m.

Stalwart's plans, with which it has cornered 70 per cent of the market, differ from those sold in the late 1980s. Then, many

lenders advanced mortgages which were invested with the aim of paying off the loan and giving borrowers an income.

The housing market's collapse, together with rising interest rates and the stock market fall, meant tens of thousands of people found themselves with huge loans they could not pay off.

## GE Capital buys insurance firm that targets smokers

**Nic Cleary**  
Personal Finance Editor

GE Capital, the US financial services giant, is paying £60m to take over Stalwart Group, the insurance company specialising in home income plans and annuities for smokers and other health-impaired individuals.

The purchase - from Euro-

pean Acquisition Capital (EAC), Foreign & Colonial Ventures and other smaller shareholders - means Stalwart's value has risen more than three-fold since 1994.

Bert Wiegman, chief executive at EAC, said yesterday: "We are delighted with this investment's performance. Not only is it a satisfying financial return

for EAC, it is also an important strategic move for Stalwart which can now enjoy ready access to the capital and blue-chip parentage necessary to take it into its next stage of continued strong growth."

Since its acquisition by EAC in January 1994, the firm has increased its staff from 18 to 100. The turnaround at Stalwart,

based in Dorking, Surrey, follows three years in which the company has attracted massive business inflows through its promotion of pension annuity products aimed at people such as smokers. Until recently, they were able to obtain only the same pension as their healthier counterparts, despite having a greater likelihood of dying earlier.

The company also specialises in sales of "safe" home income plans, where homeowners can obtain an income in old age in return for signing over a proportion of their home's value when they die.

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IMMIGRATION

Barrie Goldsmith, Immigration



GAVYN DAVIES

It is not easy for the Government to make a watertight pre-commitment in the near future to join in two or three years' time. But a lesser option would be possible, in which it commits itself to the principle of future membership and adopts a 'convergence' programme

## Britain faces D-day on EMU and referendum

The most important decision of the Blair premiership may well be taken in the next few months, when Britain is forced to come off the fence on the question of membership of the European single currency. There are still some hopeful souls who believe that a general postponement of the entire EMU project might be engineered, if not of the ultimate launch of euro notes and coins in 2002, then at least of the initial date of monetary union in 1999.

Remember that in the first three years of EMU, from 1999 to 2002, the European Central Bank will be fully operational, but domestic currency denominations will continue to circulate in each national economy. It has been suggested (by Walter Elst among others) that this interim phase could prove extremely unstable, since it will allegedly have all of the fragility of a fixed exchange rate system, with none of the offsetting shock absorbers. Given these supposed disadvantages of the interim stage, the proposition is to shrink its length from three years to (say) one year, by delaying the launch of EMU until 2001. A further interesting wrinkle on this proposition is that the UK could provide the excuse for Germany and France to accept delay by offering to join EMU in 2001, thus allowing the entire EU to adopt the single currency simultaneously.

One problem with these ideas is that there is no longer much indication that the core members of EMU are looking for an excuse to delay. Certainly, the new French government is acting as if it has decided that EMU in 1999 is the least worst option it can choose. In Germany, where there was a major wobble in the spring and summer, nerves have now been steadied, and the French Socialists have been reluctantly accepted as

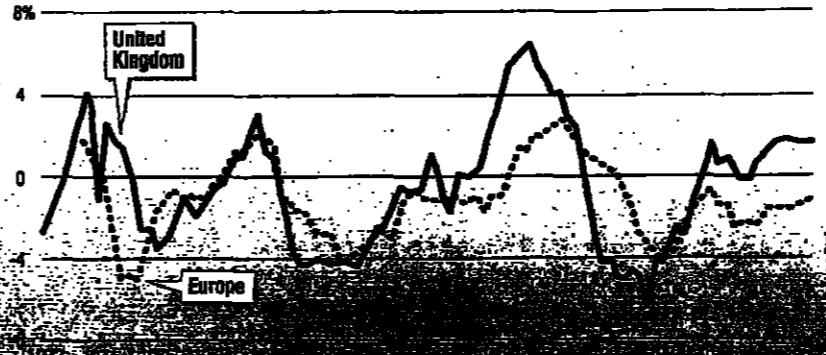
suitable partners for the marriage. In all probability, if the Blair government suggested a two-year delay in order to allow the UK to join the first round, it would be met with an embarrassing rebuff.

Another problem with this approach is that the Elst analysis of the flaws in the interim stage of the monetary union is far too pessimistic. Elst makes two crucial claims, both of which are wrong. The first is that interest rates will not be able to diverge during the interim stage, so that the private sector will face no disincentive against holding all of its assets in "strong" currency denominations like the mark, while switching completely out of "weak" denominations like the lira. The second is that, if faced with this problem, the Bundesbank might not be willing to increase the supply of marks to match the extra demand as the stampede out of lira occurs. The result would be that the mark would have to be revalued – or, in other words, the single currency would explode before it was truly launched.

Neither of these claims is valid. The first is simply based on a misperception of how the interim stage will work – it will be perfectly possible for the interest rate on mark deposits to be lower than that on lira deposits during that stage, if that is required to equilibrate the market. Provided that the whole EMU enterprise has political credibility, then a relatively small interest differential should be enough to prevent the stampede into marks which Elst fears. After all, why should the private sector choose to lose money by holding marks instead of lira, unless they become certain during the interim stage that the entire Maastricht process is imminently facing collapse?

The second claim is also invalid, provided that the Treaty stands. Under Maastricht, the

### Output gaps in the UK and continental Europe



Bundesbank will no longer be an independent central bank in the interim stage, but will instead be in the infinitely inferior position of an operating arm of the ECB. Therefore, should the Elst stampede occur, the Bundesbank will be forced under its treaty obligations to issue exactly as many marks as are required to satisfy the demand for marks. Only by repudiating the Treaty could Germany do anything different. Since no one will expect this, the problems which Elst foresees should not develop in the first place.

The lack of enthusiasm for any thoughts of delay was reinforced at the meeting of European finance ministers at the weekend, when "seior sources" from the UK were apparently acknowledging that it would be difficult for Britain to stay out of the single currency indefinitely. But entry in the first round still seems fraught with difficulties. As the graph shows, the cyclical divergence be-

tween the UK and continental Europe is still very wide, which makes it very hard even for the most enthusiastic proponents of EMU to support UK entry in 15 months' time. Imagine what would happen to the overheating British economy if short-term interest rates were to decline to the EMU average of, say, 4 per cent by the end of next year. This, combined with the effects of depreciating sterling to its likely EMU entry rate of DM2.50-2.60 would surely unleash a 1988-style boom in this country.

Furthermore, there is really no knowing when the cyclical divergence between the UK and the Continent will ironed out sufficiently to permit UK membership of the single currency. If all goes well both here and in the rest of Europe, it is possible that our economy will gradually slow down while others speed up in the next couple of years, with the two regions consequently meeting happily in

mid-cycle activity rates (ie approximately zero output gaps) in a couple of years' time.

In this event, UK membership of EMU could become feasible later in this Parliament. But it is equally possible that the UK cycle will not come into line with the European cycle for many years, in which case premature entry into the single currency would simply invite a repeat of the ERM debacle.

Given this genuine uncertainty, it is not easy for the Government to make a watertight pre-commitment in the near future to join in EMU in two or three years' time. But a lesser option would be possible, in which the Government commits itself firmly to the principle of future membership, adopts a "convergence" programme of measures which prepares the economy for membership, and actively participates in decisions relating to the future of EMU.

This would minimise the loss of political influence in the EU which will undoubtedly happen if the UK remains outside the first round. But there would still be the little matter of the timing of the referendum to consider. Until now, it has seemed safe to assume that Tony Blair would want to leave open all of his options on referendum timing so that he could opportunistically choose the right moment when it arises. But, given the extraordinary popularity of the Government, and the result in Scotland last Thursday, it may occur to the Prime Minister that an early referendum might be winnable, especially if British business comes off the fence fairly soon.

Nothing would give the inclusive Mr Blair greater pleasure than to align himself with British business, and then see his new combination defeat Mr Hague's isolationist Tory Party on the critical question of integration in Europe.

## Let's get this invention on the road

A small British company could hit the big time with a motoring innovation. Sameena Ahmad reports

Around the world the giant car makers are pouring billions of pounds into designing the latest models. But it has taken a small, British hot-house developer to come up with potentially one of the most significant innovations in the motor industry.

The Torotrak transmission system, the brainchild of the patent licensing group BTG, changes gear automatically without the use of a clutch, solving one of the motor industry's last unconquered technological problems. BTG claims it costs one-fifth less to produce than a normal automatic transmission, uses at least 15 per cent less fuel and, according to those allowed a test ride in prototype cars, gives an unbelievably smooth ride. So much so that the company is introducing an artificial lurch to remind drivers when they are racing up a hill.

Transmissions, the parts on the underside of a car that we never see, are, crudely, what makes the engine drive the wheels. The area has been a

graveyard for technological advance despite years of research effort. Engineers have long understood that fixed speed gearboxes are inefficient. To optimise fuel consumption drivers must be skilled enough to match engine speed with the car's speed, using the gears.

In theory, the solution should be continuous variable transmissions (CVT), with an infinity of gear ratios. But despite decades of research there have been few successes. The best-known CVT, and still something of a joke in the motor world, was the infamous Daf, Holland's only independent car maker until its takeover by Volvo in the mid-Seventies.

Launched in the 1950s, the Daf (later abbreviated to Daf), used rubber bands in its transmission, which became legendary for high-pitched whirring noises and delayed

acceleration. In the 1980s car giants such as Ford and Fiat developed the idea using steel belts which expanded or shrank as the speed changed.

According to BTG, Torotrak's so-called infinitely variable transmission (IVT) looks quite different, using discs and rollers to dispense with the clutch. For the first time the engine is directly connected to the wheels, dramatically improving efficiency. A car with Torotrak can be driving at 60 mph, but at such low revolutions that the engine is effectively idling.

Though no car company has yet committed to produce a car fitted with Torotrak, Ford, Toyota and Getrag, which supplies BMW with transmissions, have all signed licences with full production in mind. General Motors should be next to sign.

Ian Harvey, BTG's chief executive, predicts that Torotrak will become the industry standard by 2010. "Fuel efficiency and low production costs are crucial to car manufacturers. And Torotrak gives the same handling as current cars. No other system has all that."

The potential of Torotrak has not been lost on investors. Since BTG was floated at £40m two years ago, its value has risen almost 20-fold. Some overexcited observers even estimate that Torotrak alone justifies BTG's current £75m market valuation.

Shareholders should not underestimate the difficulty of persuading the conservative car market to adopt such a radical new product. Maurice Martin, Torotrak's chief executive, admits that car manufacturers are formidable tough customers.

He tells of painstaking instructions from one licensee to position the transmission at a

casing. "We spent so much time and effort getting it just right. In the end, the distance was too big. They told us to readjust it by hitting it with a hammer. We had to grit our teeth," he laughs. "But no car maker wants even the remotest risk that they will have to recall their vehicles."

Funding is another concern. BTG, yet to make sustained profits, is having to invest huge sums in research and in fitting out the factory at Leyland in Lancashire. Torotrak has cost more than £10m to develop so far and will not be in production in a car before 2001. Half of BTG's recent £25m placing proceeds are allocated to Torotrak to fund two years' research, yet as Mr Martin admits, Torotrak's appetite for cash is growing.

That Torotrak dominates BTG's valuation also raises a serious issue. BTG is fundamentally a patent licensing group, brimming with more than 9,000 patented inventions. For investors wary of one-product biotechnology companies,

is some 40 per cent of our valuation, which exposes us to the risk of failure. Torotrak is also a development company, taking As Mr Harvey says: "Torotrak's progress is one roadshow to keep watching.



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## news

# Politically correct tourism displaces the world's most endangered people



On safari: Masai children (above) drinking from a tourist's water bottle in the Monduli area of Tanzania

Left: European travellers pulling their truck through a muddy stretch of track during an overland trek in Cameroon

Photographs: Robert Harding Picture Library



World conservation groups accused of putting people last in rush to preserve endangered plant and animal species

#### Ian Burrell

Well-meaning conservation groups have been accused of putting trees and animals before people and driving ancient tribal groups from their land to make way for nature reserves.

Peoples that have lived self-sufficiently for centuries have been forced to give up hunting and farm only in designated areas in order to make way for eco-tourists and schemes aimed at preserving endangered species.

Survival International said last night that conservation groups were now becoming as significant a threat to the existence of tribal peoples as large corporations and oppressive governments.

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) refuted the criticisms saying that it no longer practised "eco-colonialism" and that local people were being involved in all new park projects.

Survival claimed that in the Philippines, the survival of the Tagbanwa and Batak peoples, who now number less than 1,000, is being jeopardised by plans to expand St Paul's Park, a nature reserve which was originally set up by the WWF.

Some Batak people have already been expelled from the site and the expansion would lead to a ban on them farming their lands, it said.

Another project set up by the WWF, the Korup national park in Cameroon, has led to the displacement of the Korup people, after bans on hunting were imposed. The park is designed to protect the red colobus monkey and other species.

Survival also criticised Conservation International, an American organisation, for setting up a project in Suriname to scour the jungle to find them medicinal plants for use in the pharmaceutical industry.

It said the local people, the Saramakauer Maroons, could not read or write and had no knowledge of international property rights.

The pattern for excluding native people from conservation parks was set by German zoologist Professor Bernhard Grzimek, an outspoken champion of the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, who declared: "A national park must remain a primordial wilderness to be effective. No men, not even native ones, should live inside its borders."

Other conservation groups

have shown a willingness to work with governments which have appalling human rights records for the treatment of their indigenous peoples.

In Burma, the junta has been seeking to improve its environmental reputation by working closely with the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Smithsonian Institution, two of the world's top names in wildlife protection.

To make way for what is planned as the biggest nature reserve of its kind in the world, the Burmese army is currently driving the native Karen people from their jungle homelands and razing the area.

In Sri Lanka, the preservation

of elephants and leopards has been identified as the priority of the Maduru Oya National Park where the presence of the Veddas, the indigenous people of the island, is now illegal. The park was set up in consultation with the United

Worldwide Fund for Nature recognises that indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used and that those rights must be recognised and effectively protected.

Cherry Farrow of WWF said that the group's work was

no longer just about conservation but also attempted to alleviate poverty among the local population.

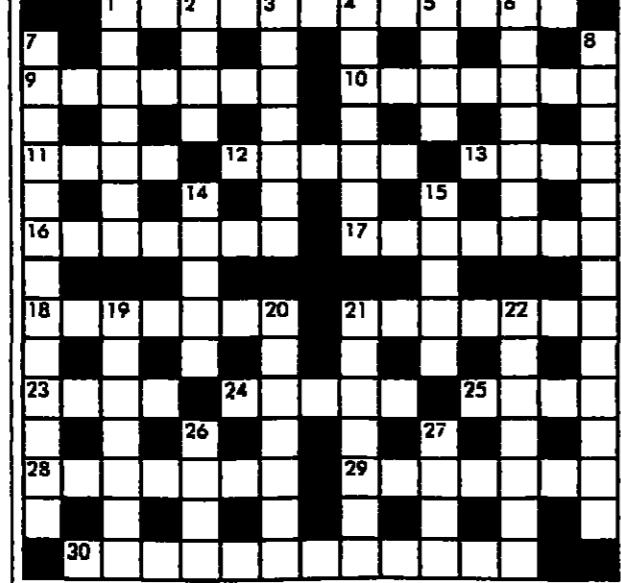
She said: "All of our work with national parks integrates with local people so that effectively they become guardians of their own resources.

"You don't manage anything if you alienate people."

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3464, Monday 15 September

By Portia



ACROSS

- Can fit out set designed for comic opera (4,3,5)
- Land American soldiers in prison (7)
- Possible to include directions in chart (7)
- Mostly happening still (4)
- Annoy soldier at first with foolish grin (5)
- Low key humour (4)
- Points cut one in addition to modern composer (7)
- Rely on the German to find Greek swimmer (7)
- Foul a line caught by sea mollusc (7)
- Measure of concern about order money (7)
- European court's backing will secure Scandinavian saga (4)
- Join female who's in a predicament (5)
- Exercise right of a service customer (4)

DOWN

- Train following one just departed (7)
- Stop providing support (4)
- Liberal citizen? (7)
- Basic colour isn't affected (7)
- Told makes of ornamental pots (4)
- Article's wrapped in tatty old bit of paper (7)
- Say goodbye to having holiday (4,5)
- Compassionate feeling fills sensitive man (6-7)
- Group's almost got a well-known song (5)
- Sounds crazy but it's soothing (5)
- Suffer from being short of energy (7)
- Journalist's turned up, railing against security (7)
- Agree with gunners - it's monstrous (7)
- A surgeon can admit adult fast (7)
- Bearing in gear for the band (4)
- Small number belong to unit (4)
- Dislike losing first rate account (7)
- Quarter of road cost is borne by state (7)
- Mass audience? (12)

#### Nations Environment Programme

Tricia Barnett, director of pressure group Tourism Concern, said: "Local people have for many years been evicted from their homes because they have not been considered responsible enough to maintain their own environment.

Where conservationists go, tourists follow but the local people cannot."

Richard Garside, spokesman for Survival, said: "People are being forced into economic and social hardship as a result of a bizarre idea of environmentalism."

"We all want a globe which is less polluted but conservation groups have got to realise that the people themselves have a stake in the environment in which they live."

Last year, the WWF, which concedes it may have had more of a paternalistic approach to tribal people in the past, published a position paper to stress its commitment to a fair relationship.

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